1-1-1967

Richard Haldane and the British Army reforms 1905-1909

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RICHARD HALDANE AND THE BRITISH ARMY REFORMS, 1905-1909

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
and the
Faculty of the College of Graduate Studies
University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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January 1967

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Accepted for the faculty of the College of Graduate Studies of the University of Omaha, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

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PREFACE

In the fourteen years which preceded World War I, an army was reborn in Great Britain. For the first time in recent British history an army was organized for war, a concept which is basic not only in Britain today but in every major military power in the world.

The movement for military reforms began slowly. Britain's bumbling, muddling victory in the South African War illuminated the army's problems. Committees and commissions probed the army's ills. Two Secretaries of State valiantly attempted to institute reforms. However, by 1906 the British Army was, with minor exceptions, unchanged from the days of Cardwell. The years 1906 to 1909, however, were characterized by dynamic changes. The army was virtually reconstituted; it was organized for war. An Expeditionary Force was created; a General Staff was established; and from the Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers a Territorial Force was fashioned.

These were the accomplishments of Viscount Richard Burdon Haldane, Secretary of State for War from 1905 to 1912. He was the "architect" of the British Army which acquitted itself with honor in World War I. The Haldane spirit is still evident today.

As a professional officer with a deep interest in military history, I was naturally drawn to this milestone in the history of one of the oldest and proudest armies in the world. I intend to examine the influences and conditions which in the years 1900 to 1906 brought the pot of army reform to the boiling point and then portray the major reforms instituted by R.B. Haldane which contributed to a rebirth of the British Army.

It is difficult to thank all the people who have aided me in this effort: The Field-Marshals and Generals who gave of their valuable time to answer my letters, particularly Brigadier, Sir John K. Dunlop, a retired Territorial Officer and a renowned Military author who not only patiently answered my questions from his vast authoritative knowledge in this area, but also furnished me with rare sources from his own library; Miss Ella Jane Dougherty of the Omaha University Library whose patience and aid in locating research materials is also worthy of mention. I would also like to thank the Department of History, Western Reserve University, for granting me permission to use and quote from a doctoral dissertation on this subject. My wife, Angela, a dutiful Air Force wife, deserves my thanks. Finally, I owe a special debt to the graduate faculty of the History Department of the University of Omaha, particularly Dr. A. Stanley Trickett without whose inspiration and guidance this thesis would have remained merely an idea.

September 1966 Harry H. Bendorf

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CHAPTER I

PRELUDE TO REFORM

In the history of the British Army reforms usually follow war or catastrophe. As the Cardwell reforms followed the Crimean War, so the Boer War sparked a reform of the whole British defense structure. The period 1900-1905 was marked by several attempts at reform. The ills of the patient, the army, had been exposed by the Boer War and the government of the day, like a doctor, probed for the proper diagnosis through the employment of committees and commissions. The Secretaries of State for War attempted first one remedy and then another; however, few reforms were translated from theories into actions. This period was not without significance. Faltering steps along the road to reform were taken and the government became acutely aware that a thorough reorganization of the army was necessary. This was the prelude, the forerunner to a series of reforms which reshaped and revitalized the entire British Army.

The Boer War and its Legacy

The Boer War, in the closing years of Victoria's reign, was a major stimulus for army reform. When the conflict broke out in 1899, the entire British force in South Africa numbered only 22,000 men.[1] Reinforcements were

[1]John Fortescue, The Empire and the Army (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1928), p. 305.

desperately needed and all available regulars and reservists were organized into a field force and embarked for South Africa in the winter of 1899.[2] The needs of war served to illustrate an obvious weakness; the army was undermanned. Most regular battalions were far below war strength, at that time approximately 1,100 men, and had to be augmented by considerable numbers of reservists. The 2nd Devonshire Battalion could muster only 461 regulars; more than 600 reservists were needed to augment the 2nd Battalion of South Wales Borderers. The 2nd Hampshires embarked for the war zone 250 men short, even after being complemented with all available reservists. This total force, the 7th Infantry Division, was composed of 4,250 reservists and 7,920 regulars when finally dispatched to South Africa.[3] Such a state of affairs was viewed with justifiable alarm by British military leaders and thinking students of the British military system remembered the problem after the conclusion of the War.

Not only were Britain's regular battalions short of men, but they had to be reclothed. A large number of British units were still dressed in the outmoded, even if colorful, regimentals which were unsuited for modern combat service.

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[2]John K. Dunlop, The Development of the British Army, 1899-1914 (London: Methuen, 1938), p. 73.

[3]H.O. Arnold-Forster, The War Office, The Army and The Empire (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1900), pp. 57-58.

General Sir H. Brackenbury, Director-General of Ordnance, was faced with the problem of equipping an entire army with suits of khaki drill.[4]

Disaster befell the British Army in December, 1899. Within one week's time British forces were defeated at Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso. "Black Week," as the period was known, aroused the nation, and the humiliating sting of the defeat of British soldiers by untrained farmers was felt throughout the length and breadth of the British Empire.[5] It had at least one good effect; it served as the trumpet call to action on the stage of reform. The Prime Minister, speaking in the House of Lords on January 30, 1900, stated, "It is evident that there is something in your machinery that is wrong. . . . I do not think that the British Constitution as at present worked is a good fighting machine. . . ."[6]

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[4]Dunlop, pp. 86-87. General Brackenbury was Director-General of Ordnance and it was his responsibility to provide the troops with uniforms. Forty thousand suits of khaki were ordered in April, 1899, but proved insufficient. Boots and helmets created additional supply problems.

[5]William Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen, 1914-1918 (2 vols.; London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1926), Vol. I, p. 14. Field-Marshal Robertson, a junior staff officer at this time, served as Chief of the Imperial General Staff during most of World War I. Also see John Terraine, Douglas Haig, The Educated Soldier (London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1963), p. 24.

[6]Robertson, Vol. I, p. 14, citing "Hansard," January 30, 1900. The Prime Minister further indicated in his speech that other large nations might threaten Britain and that changes were needed to meet this possibility.

It is to the credit of the officers and men of the British Army that they managed to "muddle through" to victory. The British fighting man conducted himself with conspicuous gallantry and adapted readily to a new method of warfare. The Aldershot drill book was soon thrown away. Buttons and brass insignia were either dyed khaki or removed. Officers discarded swords, revolvers and "Sam Brownes," and adopted the carbine and the Boer-type slouch hat.[7] Lord Methuen, while on campaign in South Africa, described himself thusly, "I look like a second-class conductor in a khaki coat with no mark of rank on it and a Boer hat and in Norwegian slippers."[8] The army learned to "travel light" as supply lines were extended. Field-Marshal Lord Allenby, then a Squadron Commander of Cavalry, wrote home:

> My property now consists of the dirty clothes I live and sleep in day and night, a cloak, a saddle blanket, a tooth brush, a box of cigarettes and a tube of lanoline. On the march I lived chiefly on biscuit and beef tongues. The horses are half starved.[9]

The war was won but at tremendous cost. In thirty-one months, 22,000 British lives were lost and the national debt rose £222 million.[10] The cost in men and money exceeded

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[7]W. Baring Pemberton, Battles of the Boer War (London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1964), p. 40. "Sam Browne" refers to an officer's leather sword belt.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Brian Gardner, Allenby (London: Cassell, 1965), pp. 31-32. Also see Archibald Wavell, Allenby: A Study in Greatness (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 85.

[10]Pemberton, p. 206.

Britain's expenditure to defeat Napoleon.[11] The returning army was not a resplendent force laden with trophies of war; the scars of combat were much in evidence. Winston Churchill, then a young officer and correspondent, described the troops as he watched them embark for England:

> First the two cavalry brigades marched past and they were brigades no longer; the Household Cavalry Regiment was scarcely fifty strong; in all there were not 1,000 sabres. Then Ridley's 1,400 mounted infantry, the remnants of what on paper was a brigade of nearly 5,000; thirty guns dragged by skinny horses. . .[12]

In the years to follow there were many lessons learned from the Boer War. On 13 December 1899, Lord Esher prophesied, "This war will do two things - change our whole military system in England and alter military tactics throughout the world."[13] His prophecies were fulfilled. Some of the defects immediately became apparent. A strike force was sorely needed as demonstrated by the haphazard augmentation of the force initially dispatched to South Africa.[14] There was virtually no army left in England; the entire regular force had been sent to South Africa, and no organized military reserve remained in

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[11]Eric W. Sheppard, A Short History of the British Army (4th ed., London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1950), p. 290.

[12]Winston S. Churchill, Frontiers and Wars (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1962), p. 567.

[13]Maurice V. Brett (ed.), Journals and Letters of Reginald Viscount Esher (4 vols.; London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, Ltd., 1934), Vol. I, p. 249. Lord Esher was close to the court. He was interested in army matters and was extremely influential in army reform.

[14]Fortescue, p. 308.

Britain in the event of another conflict. This realization shocked many British leaders.[15]

Staffs were untrained and poorly utilized at every level of command. In 1899 there was no General Staff at the War Office[16] and Field Commanders complained bitterly about the lack of intelligence information. This is not surprising since only nineteen officers staffed the entire Intelligence Department at the War Office. Accurate terrain maps were hard to come by, an understandable complaint since there were only twenty-eight personnel serving in the War Office Cartographic Section.[17] Staff officers in the field were, in many cases, officers who had no prior training in their duties,[18] and orders were frequently dispatched through the use of aides instead of normal command channels, thereby circumventing the field staffs.[19] Lord Roberts, testifying later before the Royal Commission, indicated that the staff officers of the army in South Africa had not been satisfactory. He blamed this on a lack of training and the fact that there were no definite duties established for

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[15]Arnold-Forster, p. 46. Also see Dunlop, p. 124.

[16]Ibid., p. 71.

[17]David James, Lord Roberts (London: Hollis and Carter, 1954), p. 275.

[18]L.S. Amery, The Problem of the Army (London: Edward Arnold, 1903), p. 272.

[19]Robertson, Vol. I, p. 17.

the various staff functions. He pointed out that ". . . staff officers cannot be improvised, nor can they learn their duties, like the rank and file, in a few weeks or months. . . ."[20] The fallacy of creating field forces and staffs at the time of mobilization had certainly been recognized.[21]

The government was becoming aware of the army's problems. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, a previous Secretary of State for War, charged that ". . . the government knew the extent of the Boer armaments, etc., they are culpable for not having either checked them or strengthened the colonies against them. . . ."[22] Not only government and military leaders analyzed army weaknesses, but some of the more perceptive junior officers also recognized the failings and proposed solutions. In 1900, Major Allenby noted ". . . the whole organization of the army was utterly out of date. . . ."[23] He recommended a uniformly organized army based on wartime structure and training for staff officers.[24]

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[20] James, p. 352.

[21] Frederick Maurice, Haldane, 1856-1915, Vol. I: The Life of Viscount Haldane of Cloan (2 vols.; London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1937), p. 138.

[22] J.A. Spender, The Life of the Right Honorable Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., n.d.), Vol. I, p. 256.

[23] Gardner, p. 33.

[24] Allenby was a staff college graduate, a rarity in 1900. This may account for his forward-looking views.

The need for a striking force and organization of an army for war was paramount. The lack of a General Staff or staffs at the lower level had also become a matter for concern.[25] These were some of the problems which faced the Secretary of State for War, St. John Brodrick.

The Brodrick Scheme

St. John Brodrick, who entered the cabinet in October of 1900,[26] was no stranger to the War Office. He had served as Financial Secretary to the War Office and several years as Under-Secretary for War.[27] To become Secretary of State for War had been Brodrick's lifelong ambition[28] and he wasted little time in proposing his preconceived plan for reform. In his speech on Army Estimates 28 February 1901, Mr. Brodrick proposed an organization of Six Army Corps, made up of Regulars, Militia, and Volunteers. Three of these Army Corps were to serve as an Expeditionary Force ready for immediate deployment and three of them were to be used for home defense. These Six Army Corps were to be geographically distributed throughout Great Britain. The First Army Corps at Aldershot, the Second

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[25]Amery, p. 11.

[26]R.C.K. Ensor, England, 1870-1914, Vol. XIV of The Oxford History of England, ed. G.N. Clark (14 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p. 612. Brodrick later became Viscount Midleton.

[27]Dunlop, p. 128.

[28]Brett (ed.), Vol. I, p. 269.

Corps at Salisbury Plain, the Third in Ireland, the Fourth Army Corps at Colchester, and the Fifth and Sixth Army Corps at York and Edinburgh, respectively. The initial proposal provided for seventy-nine Infantry Battalions of the Line at home and seventy-seven abroad. By 1903, a detailed composition of the Six Army Corps organization was published.[29]

The Six Army Corps organization, a conglomerate of regular and auxiliary forces, was not very practical. It must be remembered that during the first part of Mr. Brodrick's term at the War Office the British Army was still engaged in the Boer War; the scheme, therefore, depended on troops still serving in South Africa.

The Brodrick plan invited immediate criticism. Lord Esher, constantly vigilant of army activities, wrote King Edward VII that, considering present conditions at the War Office with military officials each going their own way, the War Minister's task had an air of hopelessness.[30] Brodrick had few supporters; Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman wrote to a close friend, "You ask about Brodrick's Army scheme. Certainly attack it freely. It has no friends that I know of - Military or Civilian."[31] King Edward VII must also be numbered among Mr. Brodrick's critics. He believed that the War Minister did not

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[29]Dunlop, pp. 131-137.

[30]Brett (ed.), Vol. I, p. 401. Lord Esher maintained an active correspondence with the King and other members of the court. Esher served as King Edward's "eyes and ears" on army matters.

[31]Spender, Vol. II, p. 88. Campbell-Bannerman, an ex-Secretary of State for War, believed that the old army should be left alone and not meddled with.

TABLE 1

THE COMPOSITION OF THE SIX ARMY CORPS*

First Army Corps (Aldershot) and First Cavalry Brigade, Headquarters, Aldershot

Cavalry	5 Regiments	Regular			
Artillery	27 Batteries	Regular			
Infantry	25 Battalions	Regular			

Second Army Corps (Southern) and Second Cavalry Brigade, Headquarters, Tidworth

Cavalry	5 Regiments	Regular			
Artillery	27 Batteries	Regular			
Infantry	25 Battalions	Regular			

Third Army Corps (Irish) and Third Cavalry Brigade

Cavalry	5 Regiments	Regular			
Artillery	27 Batteries	24 Regular	3 Militia		
Infantry	25 Battalions	22 Regular	3 Militia		

Fourth Army Corps (Eastern) and Household Cavalry Brigade, Headquarters, London

Cavalry	5 Regiments	4 Regular	1 Imperial	Yeomanry	
Artillery	27 Batteries	18 Regular	6 Militia	3 Volunteer	
Infantry	25 Battalions	8 Regular	8 Militia	9 Volunteer	

Fifth Army Corps (Northern) and Fourth Cavalry Brigade, Headquarters, York

Cavalry	5 Regiments	1 Regular	4 Imperial	Yeomanry	
Artillery	27 Batteries	18 Regular	6 Militia	3 Volunteer	
Infantry	25 Battalions	4 Regular	13 Militia	8 Volunteer	

Sixth Army Corps (Scottish), Headquarters, Edinburgh

Calvalry	5 Regiments		Imperial	Yeomanry	
Artillery	26 Batteries	17 Regular	6 Militia	3 Volunteer	
Infantry	25 Battalions	2 Regular	13 Militia	10 Volunteer	

*John K. Dunlop, The Development of the British Army, 1894-1914 (London: Methuen, 1938), pp. 137-138, citing Command Paper 1413, 1903.

give proper credence to the views of his military advisors. The King wrote Brodrick indicating his support in matters of reform but also alluded to criticism which he had to make of the Brodrick scheme. The Sovereign, interested in the most minute details affecting his army, even criticized Brodrick's choice of khaki uniforms for the Yeomanry.[32]

Press reaction to the Six Army Corps scheme also was deprecatory.[33] Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine attacked Mr. Brodrick for his lack of action and for the fact that the Six Army Corps scheme was nothing but a paper organization.[34]

One of the most active oponents of the Brodrick plan was a young member of Parliament, Winston Churchill. The fact that Brodrick was married to the daughter of one of Churchill's best friends did not deter the member from Oldham.[35] Mr. Churchill's criticisms of the Brodrick scheme verbalized the

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[32]Sidney Lee, The Reign, Vol. II: King Edward VII, A Biography (2 vols.; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1927), Vol. II., pp. 200-208. The King argued that the Yeomanry would only see limited service abroad, therefore, khaki was unnecessary. He settled for colorful facings, however, when he found that Lord Roberts supported khaki uniforms.

[33]A perusal of The Times (London) in the years 1901 and 1902 indicates overwhelming dissatisfaction with Mr. Brodrick's proposals. This can be partially attributed to L.S. Amery, Military Correspondent, who opposed the scheme.

[34]"Mr. Brodrick and Army Reform," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, January - June, 1902, pp. 583-587.

[35]Peter de Mendelssohn, The Age of Churchill (London: Thames and Hudson, 1961), p. 189.

feelings of many groups and elements in the government. Churchill wielded the verbal cudgel with eloquence and effect. He was certainly instrumental in sounding the death knell for Brodrick's proposals. He first attacked the plan on the basis of its expense; in the House of Commons on May 12, 1901, Churchill stated, "I regard it as a grave mistake in Imperial policy to spend thirty millions a year on the Army."[36] Churchill accurately sensed that the public had quickly forgotten the defeats of the Boer War and was interested in tightening the purse strings.[37] Further, he questioned the need for an army of such extraordinary size and quoted the inane question of one member of Parliament who asked:

> What are we to do with our generals? When they come home from South Africa with no more worlds to conquer they must keep their hands in, and they must be provided with an army, even if it does cost thirty millions a year to save them from getting out of practice.

Churchill derisively replied, "I had always been led to believe that generals existed for the Army and not the Army for the generals."[38] The scheme was denounced in the press, in the House of Commons and by the military. Churchill further contended that the three Army Corps Expeditionary Force should be reduced to one Army Corps. He reasoned ". . . one is quite enough to fight savages, and three are not enough even to

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[36]Winston S. Churchill, Mr. Brodrick's Army (London: Arthur L. Humphreys, 1903), p. 13.

[37]Owen Wheeler, The War Office Past and Present (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1914), p. 261.

[38]Churchill, Mr. Brodrick's Army, p. 18.

begin to fight Europeans."[39]

There is no doubt that young Churchill's views were somewhat parochial and that he was a firm believer in the "Blue Water Doctrine." He declaimed, "The honour and security of the British Empire do not depend, and can never depend, on the British Army. The Admiralty is the only Office strong enough to insure the British Empire. . . ."[40]

Churchill also charged that Britain was not getting her money's worth. France was paying twenty-eight millions for twenty Army Corps; Germany could buy twenty-two Army Corps at a price tag of twenty-six millions; and Russia could fund twenty-three Army Corps with thirty-two millions.[41]

By January of 1903, Brodrick's plan was clearly marked a failure, yet Churchill was not content. He continued to condemn Brodrick and the scheme in his speeches. He objected that the plan did not properly provide for the defense of England. It was too costly. He branded the scheme an ". . . ill considered conglomeration of absurdities. . . ."[42]

Brodrick's proposals for enlistments also came under Churchill's guns, and the young member of Parliament continued

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[39] Ibid., p. 22.

[40] Ibid., p. 24.

[41] Ibid., p. 30.

[42] Ibid., pp. 60-61.

his attack on the unfortunate War Minister:

> Two years ago he /Brodrick/ told us that he adhered to a system of enlistment whereby men serve seven years in the Army and five with the Reserve, and last year he came down to the House of Commons with a new plan of their serving three years with the colours and nine with the Reserve. . . .[43]

Brodrick had only realized a fraction of his plan. Churchill did not fail to grasp this fact and criticized:

> The First Army Corps is not yet half formed; the Second Army Corps is a mere skeleton; the Third Army Corps is incomplete. The Fourth Army Corps consists of Lord Grenfell, who is and needs to be a host in himself. And as for the Fifth and Sixth Army Corps, where are they? I am told that one of them is lying in a pigeon-hole at the War Office, and that Mr. Brodrick has taken the other with him in a red dispatch-box on his cruise in the Mediterranean. . . .[44]

Churchill was one of many, but the most articulate of the critics. The influential L.S. Amery compared the Brodrick Army Corps to one of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales.[45]

Brodrick's scheme was a monumental failure; however, he must be credited with some excellent improvements in the British Army. Under his administration an improved rifle was adopted; heavy artillery was introduced; ambulances were improved; the expense of uniforms was reduced and their serviceability was increased. An experimental barrack was built which allowed soldiers to have a small cubicle to themselves instead of living in a large open bay. The War Office also received some

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[43] Ibid., p. 62.

[44] Ibid., p. 64. Considerable use of Churchill's speeches and quotations are made here because he was one of Brodrick's most consistent and articulate critics.

[45] Amery, p. 27.

much-needed attention. Mobilization and Intelligence were placed under a single head and a department of Education and Training was also created.[46] The War Office career of Brodrick ended in the autumn of 1903, and he became Secretary for India.

Committees and Commissions

The story of army reform in those uncertain days would be incomplete without a description of the multitude of committees and Royal Commissions which were constituted to review and investigate army problems. Between the Crimean War and the year 1904, there are records of 567 committees and commissions dealing with the British Army.[47]

The first commission which came to grips with the problems of the army in the final years of Victoria's reign was the famous Hartington Commission. This commission was appointed in 1888 to investigate the administration of the army and navy and their relationship with the treasury. Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Campbell-Bannerman were two members of this body.[48] The reports of this commission were in two sections; one was rendered in 1889, the other in 1890.[49]

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[46]James, p. 383

[47]Hampden Gordon, The War Office (London: Putnam, 1935), pp. 48-49.

[48]Wheeler, p. 244.

[49]Gordon, p. 68.

The Hartington Commission recommended that the post of Commander-in Chief should be abolished and be replaced by a General Officer responsible to the Secretary of State for War and that a General Staff be created.[50] Had these recommendations been implemented immediately, the work of future commissions might have been eased considerably. However, the report was weakened by Campbell-Bannerman who submitted a dissenting minority opinion. He took issue with the creation of a Chief of Staff. He considered the post unnecessary as it would too closely pattern the British Army after the Prussian staff.[51]

The reactions of the Commander-in Chief, the Duke of Cambridge, and Queen Victoria were predictable; the Queen termed the report abominable and the Duke warned of catastrophic implications.[52] The considerations were political; the Queen had utilized a royal Commander-in Chief as her liaison with the army for forty years and at this time she was considering the Duke of Connaught as the logical successor

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[50]Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Vol. XIX (Reports of Commissioners), Cmd. 5979, 1890, "Preliminary Report of the Royal Commissioners appointed to enquire into the Civil and Professional Administration of the Naval and Military Departments," pp. 1-17, cf. Amery, pp. 291-292, citing The Hartington Commission Report.

[51]Spender, Vol. I, pp. 117-119.

[52]Gordon, p. 69.

to his cousin's post.[53]

The recommendations of the Hartington Commission did not come to pass until later years. In his memoirs, Field Marshal Sir William Robertson wrote, "So long as these views prevailed, /The Queen's and Campbell-Bannerman's/ it was not possible for the Empire to be provided with the requisite measure of military security, and nothing of much value was in fact done until some fourteen years later."[54]

The next commission of importance was the Elgin Commission. The bitter experience of the South African War fresh upon his mind, King Edward VII pressed for an investigation in August of 1901. However, when the cabinet recommended a Royal Commission of Investigation in 1902, the King objected to "washing one's dirty linen in public."[55] The cabinet, however, persevered and the King relented. It was he who suggested Lord Esher serve on the commission[56] which was officially constituted in 1902 as the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa. The chairman of the commission

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[53]James, pp. 222-223. This attitude was clearly reflected in a letter to the King from Lord Esher who wrote, "The recommendation of the Commission was not carried out, because the Queen, very naturally, at the end of her Majesty's long life and reign was unwilling to face the consideration of so great a change." See Brett (ed.), Vol. I, p. 409.

[54]Robertson, Vol. I, p. 9.

[55]Lee, Vol. II, p. 91.

[56]Ibid., p. 92.

was the Earl of Elgin; Viscount Esher and Sir George Taubman-Goldie were among its most prominent members.[57] The purpose of this group was to investigate the preparations which had been made for war in South Africa, particularly in the area of equipment and personnel.[58] The investigation of the commission was thorough and complete; more than 22,000 questions were asked and 114 witnesses examined.[59]

Throughout the proceedings, Lord Esher faithfully kept the King informed. On October 14, 1902, he directed the Sovereign's attention to Kitchener's recommendations for more training for both officers and men.[60] As witnesses were called and examined, Esher continued his voluminous correspondence to King Edward VII. Lord Esher was particularly impressed by the detailed testimony of Lord Roberts who displayed an excellent grasp of the entire military situation.[61] As the commission began to consider its report, it became evident that all members were not in agreement. Lord Esher wrote on 30 April 1903, "We had a long and difficult day with the Commission. It was a prolonged wrangle over the

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[57]Dunlop, pp. 148-149. The Royal Commission on the War in South Africa was also known as the "Elgin Commission." It was also incorrectly referred to as the "Esher Commission."

[58]Dunlop, p. 166.

[59]James, p. 387.

[60]Brett (ed.), Vol. I, pp. 355-356.

[61]Ibid., pp. 368-369. Lord Roberts was at this time Commander-in Chief.

Report, and there is no chance of an agreement upon the points which I care most about."[62]

The Elgin Commission published its findings in August of 1903. The deficiencies revealed can be best summed up in the words of the report:

> Only an extraordinary combination of fortunate circumstances, external and internal, saved the Empire during the early months of 1900 and there is no reason to expect a repetition of such fortune, if, as appears probable, the next national emergency still finds us discussing our preparation.[63]

The report offered no particular recommendations but summarized the state of unpreparedness for war which existed in the British Army.

Lord Esher, however, submitted an important minority report concerning War Office organization. He recommended that the War Office Council be reorganized and their functions be defined; that the War Department must be decentralized internally and most important, that the post of Commander-in Chief be abolished and a General Officer who was responsible to the Secretary of State for War be appointed. Sir George Taubman-Goldie added his concurrence to the views of Viscount Esher.[64]

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[62] Ibid., p. 400.

[63] James, p. 392, quoting Report of the Royal Commission on the South African War, 1903.

[64] Amery, pp. 295-301, citing Lord Esher's Memorandum on War Office Organization. This memorandum, as well as Sir Taubman-Goldie's views are reproduced in Amery's book. Also see Dunlop, pp. 203-204.

In April, 1903, another commission, the Norfolk Commission, was formed. This body concerned itself with the Auxiliary Forces and an exploration into the possibility of compulsory service.[65] The commission, chaired by the Duke of Norfolk, numbered among its members the Earl of Derby, Baron Grenfell and many distinguished militia and volunteer officers. One of these was H. Spenser Wilkinson,[66] author of The Brain of an Army, a book which wielded tremendous influence on the later establishment of a General Staff. This commission was charged to determine whether the organization of the Auxiliary Forces was adequate and to recommend changes to insure their efficiency and strength.[67]

The commission made many valuable recommendations, particularly those pertaining to the Volunteers. It proposed a system for training volunteer officers and giving them monetary grants to attend schools to improve their efficiency. Recommendations to improve training in musketry and gunnery also were proposed.[68]

Even though not explicit, the Norfolk Commission recommended some measure of conscription to augment Militia and Volunteer forces.[69] H.O. Arnold-Forster, Secretary of

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[65] Ibid., p. 151. The Norfolk Commission was also referred to as the "Auxiliary Forces Commission."

[66] Ibid., p. 173.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., pp. 315-319, citing Report of the Norfolk Commission. The extract from this report is contained in Appendix H of Dunlop.

[69] Ibid., p. 176.

State for War at that time, indicated his irritation with the report of this commission when he wrote to his sister, "At the last moment there comes on the top of me the report of the Auxiliary Forces Commission; and every recommendation in it means money."[70] On the other hand, Lord Roberts, Commander-in Chief and a staunch supporter of compulsory service, firmly supported the findings of this commission.[71]

In 1903, the King placed considerable pressure on Lord Esher to become Secretary of State for War. Esher, however, did not want the post and considered himself more valuable in his present capacity. He preferred the guise of subtle influence to the mantle of public office. Esher, however, did consent to act as Chairman of a committee to reorganize the War Office.[72] On September 27, 1903, he wrote Lord Knollys, the King's Secretary, "If this plan is adopted and I am chairman of such a body, I shall propose to take the War Office Administration right through, from top to bottom and endeavor to make it a first class business machine. . . ."[73] It was at King Edward's urging that the committee of three was

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[70]Mrs. H.O. Arnold-Forster, The Right Honourable Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster, A Memoir (London: Edward Arnold, 1910), p. 255, hereafter cited as Memoir.

[71]James, pp. 413-414.

[72]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, pp. 14-18. Lord Esher shunned public office. He had previously refused the Under-Secretaryship for War as well as other important offices. He did serve as Secretary to H.M. Office of Works from 1895-1902.

[73]Ibid., p. 23.

appointed to consider the complete reorganization of the War Office.[74] In November 1903, the membership was constituted. It consisted of Viscount Esher as Chairman, Admiral Sir John Fisher, and Sir George Sydenham Clarke. Lieutenant-Colonel G.F. Ellison was appointed Secretary,[75] a post which was to have a profound influence on his career.

The committee worked with speed and dispatch and the first of the committee's recommendations were submitted on 30 December 1903. The group recommended that the Office of the Secretary of State for War should be placed on an equivalent plane with the First Lord of the Admiralty; the administration of the War Office should be vested in an Army Council, headed by the Secretary of State, and composed of four military members and two members of Parliament. The committee further proposed the abolition of the post of Commander-in Chief; that a General Staff be established; and that an Inspector General be appointed to insure efficient and standard training for the army. The committee also proposed a revision of financial control.[76] These recommendations were well received and the King wanted to decorate the committee in recognition of their services. However, Mr. Balfour, the Prime Minister, did not concur since Fisher was elevated to First Sea Lord and the post of the Secretary of the Imperial

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[74]Lee, Vol. II, p. 194.

[75]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 30. Also see Gordon, p. 78.

[76]Ibid., pp. 79-80. Also see Lee, Vol. II, pp. 196-197.

Defense Committee had gone to Clarke.[77] He considered these rewards sufficient.

Government reaction was almost immediate. The Army Council was appointed on February 8, 1904.[78] Press reaction was also favorable. The Times heralded the committee report as ". . . One of the most important state documents issued in this generation."[79] Lord Esher was naturally pleased with the reception of the report. He noted, "The thing which gratifies me is the enthusiasm of the young officers of the Army. They are more than friendly. Lord Roberts alone, among the older men, is full of congratulation."[80] The office of the Commander-in Chief was finally abolished. There was little consideration for the feelings of Lord Roberts, incumbent of that office, or for some of his fellow officers. In order to vacate the post and to mollify Lord Roberts, he was offered the Inspector Generalship which, after serving as Commander-in Chief, he was bound to refuse. Arthur Balfour wrote to Roberts, "It is, of course, impossible for me to suggest that on the abolition of the post of Commander-in Chief you would accept this new and as now designed, distinctly inferior position. . . ."[81]

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[77] Ibid. The King deferred to Mr. Balfour's desires. He made sure, however, that the government knew of his high regard for these three individuals.

[78] Dunlop, p. 208.

[79] The Times (London), February 1, 1904.

[80] Brett (ed.), Vol. II, pp. 41-42.

[81] James, p. 402.

The lack of respect and the abruptness of manner with which high ranking officers were being dismissed at the War Office left much to be desired. General Henry Wilson, referring to the committee of three, commented, "The triumvirate are carrying on like madmen. . . ." He also noted the rapidity with which the changeover of the War Office took place.[82]

The Esher Committee recommendations were a positive beginning. Much was yet left to be done; however, the period of attempts, experiments and unsuccessful schemes was not yet past.

Mr. Arnold-Forster at the War Office

While the committees and commissions were grinding out their findings and recommendations, another change had taken place at the War Office. Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster had succeeded St. John Brodrick to the War Office post. The Prime Minister invited Arnold-Forster to become a member of the cabinet in October 1903,[83] and Arnold-Forster was immediately faced with a personal decision. He had just recently suffered a slight heart attack while horseback riding[84] and was uncertain of his physical fitness for this

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[82]C.E. Callwell, Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: His Life and Diaries (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), Vol. II, p. 55. Also cited in James, p. 402.

[83]Arnold-Forster, Memoir, p. 224.

[84]Ibid., p. 223.

strenuous undertaking. However, the new War Minister had definite ideas about army reorganization and believed that he deserved his chance to carry them out.[85] His was to be a short career laden with frustrations and opposition which hounded him at every turn. He clearly realized the obstacles he faced. It was only days after he accepted the seals of the War Office that he confided to his brother, "Parliamentary time must be short - may even be very short - the Party, on whose support I must rely, is torn by conflicting views. . . ."[86]

Arnold-Forster was not a newcomer to army problems and was eminently qualified to undertake the task he set out to do. His qualifications are well summed up in his own words:

> . . . I have been a most careful student of all questions connected with the services. Of the actual experiences of war I do not pretend to have any knowledge, but of soldiers I have seen something. I have been at the manoeuvres of nearly every army in Europe, and constantly at those of our own troops. I have marched with the infantry regiments and ridden with the artillery. I have seen artillery firing and experiments in gunnery of every kind.[87]

The new Secretary of State for War had also written extensively about the army and army problems.[88] Esher, whose hand

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[85] Ibid., pp. 223-226.

[86] Ibid., p. 225.

[87] Arnold-Forster, The War Office, The Army, and The Empire, p. 5.

[88] Arnold-Forster, Memoir, p. 371.

continued on the pulse of army affairs, warned Balfour ". . . Do not let Arnold-Forster be in a hurry. Brodrick created six beautiful Army Corps on paper. Let his younger colleague beware."[89]

Arnold-Forster's environment was not a pleasant one. The army was bitter because it had been the target of continued organizational changes and its pride had suffered as the result of the post-Boer War investigations and inquiries. Arnold-Forster was also faced with the cry for economy. The British people were tiring of carrying the burden of the wartime army budget.[90] Time for planning was short. The new War Secretary was immediately faced with several considerations. The three-year enlistment policy had failed and the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa also were still largely without action. He immediately drafted a memorandum which was circulated among the Army Council, the cabinet and the military leaders.[91]

Basically, Arnold-Forster's recommendations were these: The British Army should be made up of a Long Service Army and an army for home service. The Long Service Army would be composed of regular battalions and would be eligible for

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[89]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 31.

[90]Arnold-Forster, Memoir, pp. 232-233.

[91]Ibid., pp. 236-237.

service throughout the Empire. The Home Army would be tasked with the responsibility of reinforcing the Long Service Army and expansion in the event of war. The terms of enlistment for the Home Army would be fifteen months with the colors and six years in the reserve, whereas the Long Service soldier would serve nine years on active duty and three in the reserve. Arnold-Forster also proposed the reduction of several battalions of regulars whereas a large portion of the Militia would make up the Home Service Army. The remainder of the Militia would be disbanded.[92] Brodrick's Army Corps system was effectively discontinued with the new scheme proposed by Arnold-Forster.

High ranking militia officers who sat in the House of Lords and had vested interests in the Militia wasted no time in making their influence felt.[93] In the spring of 1904, Arnold-Forster began to sense the spirit of opposition that was building against him. "Of course I know exactly what I want to do," he wrote, "but the trouble is to persuade other people."[94]

The War Secretary also encountered considerable delay in moving his memorandum through the cabinet and the Council.[95] "Here am I," he wrote in June 1904, "in a sea of troubles, not

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[92] Ibid., pp. 239-241.

[93] Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 58.

[94] Arnold-Forster, Memoir, pp. 251-252.

[95] Dunlop, p. 178.

all of my own making. My statement has been put off - to the Greek Kalends, perhaps; I know not."[96]

Finally in July of 1904, the War Minister addressed the House of Commons and presented his complete proposal for the reorganization of the army and the War Office. He formalized his scheme for the two armies. He asked for a reduction of Volunteers and Militia, however, he proposed to take 60,000 Volunteers into his Home Army. With his recommendations, the old Cardwellian principle of linked battalions was abandoned.[97]

A part of the General Service Army was to be quartered at Aldershot and serve as a striking force. The Home Army was to be composed of 107 Guard and Line Battalions whereas the General Service Army would be composed of 185 Guard and Line Battalions.[98]

The opposition now began to form in strength. The press reaction was generally unfavorable; Lieutenant-Colonel A.W.A. Pollock, the editor of United Services Magazine, condemned Arnold-Forster's scheme for not including a provision for conscription.[99] Lord C.F. Haliburton, a previous

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[96]Arnold-Forster, Memoir, p. 255.

[97]Ibid., pp. 265-267. Also see Dunlop, pp. 180-181.

[98]Ibid.

[99]A.W.A. Pollock, "Army Reorganization," The Fortnightly Review, Vol. LXXVI (July to December, 1904), pp. 1064-1072.

TABLE 2

ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL SERVICE ARMY AND THE HOME SERVICE ARMY AS PROPOSED BY H.O. ARNOLD-FORSTER*

	Number of Battalions		All Ranks
	Foot Guards	Line Battalions	
Home	10	--	9,079
	--	26 General Service	21,024
	--	71 Home Service	36,920
Total for Home . .	10	97	67,023
Total for Colonies and Egypt	--	26 General Service	22,438
Total for India	--	52 General Service	53,924
Total	10	175	143,385

*John K. Dunlop, The Development of the British Army, 1899-1914 (London: Methuen, 1938), p. 181, citing Command Paper 1910, August 1, 1904.

Under-Secretary for War published a pamphlet entitled Army Organization, in which he summed up the scheme as ". . . illogical, incongruous and impracticable."[100]

The attacks began to tell on the unfortunate War Minister and he related to his sister in August of 1904, "Yes, I am a Secretary of State, no doubt, but not destined, I fear, to be a very fortunate one."[101] He had little doubt that both the military and the public stood solidly against him.

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[100]Lord Haliburton, Army Organization (London: Edward Stanford, 1905), p. 44.

[101]Arnold-Forster, Memoir, p. 273.

When Parliament reconvened in 1905, the pressure continued. In February of that year he was taken to task by the honorable member from Oldham, Winston Churchill, on the policy of enlistments. Churchill, who was concerned with the constant altering of the enlistment period, charged that in a span of four years the enlistment period had undergone five changes and that stability was needed.[102] In April, 1905, Campbell-Bannerman rose in the House of Commons to belabor the unfortunate War Minister, charging that no progress was being made in the area of army reform and that during the last four years one scheme had followed another.[103] Campbell-Bannerman believed there was a distinct lack of unity in the proposed reforms and that Arnold-Forster was not getting to the root of the matter. This opinion was shared by many in the House of Commons and the army.[104] Arnold-Forster was beset not only by the opposition from the army and the government; St. John Brodrick and Lord Lansdowne, his two predecessors, also schemed against him. After all, he was condemning their administrations.[105]

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[102]Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates, Fourth Series, CXLI (1905), p. 1193, hereafter cited as "Parl. Debs.".

[103]Ibid., CXLV (1905), p. 611.

[104]Spender, Vol. II, pp. 149-150.

[105]Elie Halévy, The Rule of Democracy, 1905-1914, Vol. VI: A History of English People in the Nineteenth Century, trans. E.I. Watkins (6 vols.; New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1961), p. 171. Their opposition was earlier predicted by Lord Esher. See Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 32.

King Edward VII must also be counted among the opposition. He did not appreciate the highhanded methods of Arnold-Forster who either did not keep him fully informed of proposed reforms or did not give the monarch adequate time to study the proposals he presented to him.[106] After the 14th of July 1905 speech, the King let it be known ". . . that what the Army, expecially the Officers throughout the Army, requires at the present time, is a period free from disturbance and constant change."[107]

As the year 1905 came to an end, the Unionists were swept from office, and with them Arnold-Forster. Lord Esher crowed, "The change of Government has produced one great good at least. It has rid us of Arnold-Forster."[108]

The unfortunate War Minister cannot be held solely accountable for his failures. He was tactless and overbearing with his generals, yet he was also dedicated, sincere and difficult to sway. H.O. Arnold-Forster did not believe in compromise.

The demise of Arnold-Forster's ill-fated reforms must also be attributed to other factors: the failure to fill enlistments for the outposts of the Empire; the powerful and influential militia officers who protected their vested interests from their lofty seats in the House of Lords; and

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[106]Lee, Vol. II, pp. 196-208, passim.

[107]Ibid., p. 205.

[108]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 132.

the opposition in the House of Commons, particularly from those who wished to economize on the army in order to benefit the navy.[109]

The Lack of Professionalism in the Army

To place this era of attempted reforms into its proper perspective, it is necessary to consider one more important factor - the army and its lack of professionalism.

The army which fought in the Boer War was basically without change from the days of Cardwell. Years earlier the Duke of Wellington had complained that, "Nobody in the British Army ever reads a regulation or an order as if it were to be a guide for his conduct, or in any other manner than as an amusing novel."[110] This distinct lack of professionalism was still prevalent among Queen Victoria's officers. The military calling was once referred to as, "A phase in the sporting equipment of a gentleman."[111] It was certainly so considered by many of the army officers of that day. One historian described the British Army as "An army of ordinary men officered by gentlemen."[112] Very few of these young gentlemen were interested in making the army a full-time professional occupation. Some

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[109] Dunlop, p. 197.

[110] Robert Blake, "Great Britain," Soldiers and Governments, ed. Michael Howard (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), p. 27.

[111] Gordon, p. 77.

[112] Sheppard, p. 475.

officers of fashionable cavalry regiments spent as many as 250 days a year on leave, hunting, or engaged in other sporting events.[113] Field-Marshal Wavell's first request to his Commanding Officer, when reporting to India as a young subaltern, was for three months' leave to go hunting; it was granted.[114]

Throughout the officer corps there seemed to be an antipathy to theory and military education. Gambling and bibbing wine were more pleasurable occupations. Few owned a professional library.[115] Training was lacking. At the War Office the responsibility for training of troops was vested in two junior officers.[116] The military education of the young officer at Sandhurst was also outdated. Field-Marshal Wavell, looking back to his days at Sandhurst related:

> We spent a lot of time doing sketches and in drawing to scale diagrams of old-fashioned redoubts, lunettes, etc., which I suspect were unchanged since Crimean days. On the other hand we learnt little tactics."[117]

The Staff College was scorned by most officers and only a few competed for the thirty-two annual vacancies.[118]

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[113]H. de Watteville, The British Soldier (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1955), p. 205.

[114]John Connell, Wavell, Scholar and Soldier (New York: Harcourt, Bruce and World, Inc., 1964), p. 47.

[115]de Watteville, p. 18.

[116]Robertson, Vol. I, p. 14.

[117]Connell, pp. 38-39.

[118]Gardner, p. 14.

These conditions had to be changed. Fortunately, a new breed of officers was in evidence who were concerned with the lack of staff education and training. They did not share the majority opinion that the army was a friendly club for gentlemen, with facilities for polo and hunting. Lieutenant-Colonel William Robertson, an officer who later became a Field-Marshal, repeatedly bemoaned the lack of training of both officers and men. He was quite concerned over the lack of skilled staff officers and the fact that few senior commanders had attended the Staff College.[119]

Bernard Montgomery, then a young subaltern, was disgusted with the senseless traditions which permeated the Officers' Messes of the early 1900's. Compulsory drinking particularly irked the young officer.[120] He was also disturbed by the lack of professional military thinking and the attention paid to senseless minutiae. When given an oral examination on mule transports, Montgomery was appalled at the question: "How many times in each 24 hours are the bowels of a mule moved?" Ridiculous drill of this nature annoyed Montgomery and many of the new breed of British officers serving their apprenticeship in the post-Boer War days.[121]

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[119]Victor Bonham-Carter, Soldier True (London: Frederick Muller, Ltd., 1963), p. 47.

[120]Bernard Law Montgomery, The Memoirs of Field-Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, K.G. (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1958), p. 27.

[121]Ibid., pp. 28-29.

The enlisted men of the army were of a different category. They were generally of a low class, many of them illiterate. Some were not even physically fit for strenuous duty and others were barely a step ahead of the jailer.[122]

The quality of the rank and file was slowly improving, yet their education was still meager and many of them were given to excessive drinking and gambling. The middle class of England considered it a disgrace to have a son in the army. When William Robertson, later a Field-Marshal, enlisted in the army as a private, his mother wrote him, "I would rather Bury [sic] you than see you in a red coat. . . ."[123]

These were the prevailing conditions. It was due to the efforts of men like Robertson, Montgomery, Haig and Allenby that the officers of the army were to become true professionals, and that serving the colors became a respectable career. Meanwhile, however, the lack of professionalism in the army provided another spur to the steed of reform.

The Aftermath

The period of attempted army reforms serves to illustrate the magnitude of the task which confronted Richard Haldane whose reforms will be fully examined in the following chapters. The army, weary of commissions, committees, and rapidly changing administrations, viewed every new reform proposal with suspicion.

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[122] Amery, pp. 241-243.

[123] Bonham-Carter, p. 5.

The schemes of Brodrick and Arnold-Forster were still evident - like shipwrecks - to serve as a warning of the perilous course they sailed. The public was either apathetic or interested in a reduction in estimates. The government wanted changes in the army, but few were willing to vote the money to pay for them. Yet, progress had been made in the years that passed. The War Office had been reorganized and the experiments and "trials and errors" of two War Ministers were not without value.

In any event, the legacy of the Boer War and the ill-fated plans of Brodrick and Arnold-Forster provided the backdrop and the illumination without which the Haldane reforms cannot be properly evaluated.

CHAPTER II

HALDANE ENTERS THE WAR OFFICE

A Government is Formed

It was winter in England. The year was 1905 and a new government was being formed. Mr. Balfour's Unionist government had resigned and the King summoned Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the opposition leader, to form a government. Campbell-Bannerman immediately began to organize his cabinet. The leadership of the Liberal Party was, however, not united. There was a splinter group of the younger Liberals who were primarily composed of three young Liberal Imperialists, Edward Grey, H.H. Asquith and Richard Haldane.[1]

Foreseeing the fall of the Unionist government, in September 1905, Herbert Asquith, Edward Grey and Richard Haldane met and discussed the probability of Campbell-Bannerman becoming Prime Minister. In order to preserve the progressive force in the Liberal Party, the trio resolved that Campbell-Bannerman should take a peerage, leaving Asquith to lead the party in the House of Commons. The three further decided that unless Campbell-Bannerman would consent to this, they would not enter the new government. This agreement was reached at a fishing lodge near Relugas, Scotland, and

[1]Edward G. Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1892-1916 (2 vols.; New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1925), Vol. I, pp. 60-62.

thereafter was referred to by the three conspirators as "The Relugas Compact."[2]

The next step was to secure the cooperation of King Edward VII. On 12 September 1905, Haldane wrote Lord Knollys a letter in which he explained the stand that he, Asquith and Grey had taken. He further pointed out that they did not wish to cause embarrassment to the King, but that action should be taken fairly soon.[3] Lord Knollys replied on 16 September that he personally agreed with the views of Haldane and his colleagues; however, in the interests of harmony, it might be more advantageous to allow Campbell-Bannerman to assume the Premiership and then retire to the House of Lords after approximately one year's service.[4] Haldane indicated to Lord Knollys that a six month to one year waiting period would not be agreeable since a severe policy split in the party could arise in that time period.[5] On 25 September, Lord Knollys indicated his personal agreement with Haldane's views and replied that he had shown the

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[2]Richard B. Haldane, An Autobiography (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., 1929), pp. 169-171.

[3]Ibid., pp. 171-172.

[4]Ibid. Haldane indicates in his autobiography that Knollys suggested a six or twelve month period for Campbell-Bannerman to lead in the Commons. Maurice, Vol. I, p. 152, reprints the Knollys letter which states, ". . . a certain time, say a year for instance."

[5]Haldane, p. 172.

correspondence to the King who gave his approval.

On the 5th of October, the King summoned Haldane to Balmoral and gave his blessing to the basic aims of the "Relugas Compact." It now remained for Asquith to inform the aging, yet steadfast, Campbell-Bannerman of the Relugas ultimatum.[6]

On Monday, December 4, a day before Balfour's resignation, Sir Edward Grey visited Campbell-Bannerman and left no doubt that unless Sir Henry would accept a peerage, he [Grey] would not serve in the cabinet. Campbell-Bannerman was understandably hurt and angry.[7] On the following day, Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman kissed hands and the King took this opportunity to hint at a peerage because of the new Prime Minister's age and failing health. Campbell-Bannerman, however, stated his preference to begin his career as Prime Minister in the House of Commons.[8] On Wednesday, December 6, Asquith went to see Campbell-Bannerman to plead the case for Grey, Haldane and himself. The Prime Minister remained steadfast and indicated that he would have to discuss the matter with his wife. After consultation, the Campbell-Bannermans decided to refuse retirement to the House of Lords

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[6] Ibid., p. 173.

[7] Spender, Vol. II, pp. 193-194

[8] Haldane, pp. 180-181. Campbell-Bannerman was so distraught that he actually forgot to kiss the King's hands, a formal part of the ceremony. The King graciously considered it done.

and advised Asquith accordingly. Campbell-Bannerman then made a counter offer; he tendered Asquith the post of Chancellor of the Exchecquer and authorized him to offer Grey the Foreign Office and Haldane the Home Office. Asquith tried to convince the Prime Minister that Haldane would be best fitted for the "Woolsack." This cabinet berth was not available since Sir Robert Reid had already been selected for the Lord Chancellor's post.[9] The perspicacious Esher had noted as early as October 6, that Haldane ". . . wants to be Chancellor, but the King - who would like it - says he has no chance. Reid will be preferred. . . ."[10]

The Relugas Compact began to collapse on the 7th of December when Asquith accepted the Exchecquer post.[11] The negotiations, however, continued and later on Thursday, the Prime Minister offered the post of Attorney General to Haldane. "The last thing that was likely to appeal /to Haldane/. . . was the position of a Law Officer . . . /he/ had had the best that the Bar itself could give. . . ."[12] Haldane did not reply immediately but sought out Lady Horner, an old friend on whose judgment he placed considerable value.[13] To Haldane's doubts she answered: "The better for you to be a member of it /the government/ - the worse for the King and public who

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[9]Ibid. "The Woolsack" referred to the cushion upon which the Lord Chancellor was traditionally seated.

[10]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 115.

[11]Ibid., Vol. II, p. 125.

[12]Haldane, p. 182.

[13]Ibid., p. 184.

cannot escape from it."[14] Haldane was impressed but still undecided. He then went to see Grey and urged him to join in a consultation with Arthur Acland, a man whose advice they mutually respected. Acland urged Haldane and Grey to join the government because he believed that the two young statesmen would be able to do more for their party in the government than on the sidelines. Grey finally agreed with Haldane that he would come into the cabinet provided Haldane would do so also.[15] That same evening Haldane went to see the Prime Minister and told him that he could bring Grey into the government but that he did not want to be Attorney General. Campbell-Bannerman then offered him the Home Office. Haldane countered, "What about the War Office?" "Nobody," retorted Campbell-Bannerman, "will touch it with a pole." Haldane replied, "Then give it to me. I will come in as War Secretary if Grey takes the Foreign Office. . . ."[16]

Friday morning, Grey accepted the Foreign Office post. The Relugas agreement was dead and a fateful week came to an end. The government had finally been formed.[17]

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[14] Ibid., p. 190.

[15] Ibid., pp. 184-185.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., p. 194. Haldane later wrote that he felt it was the King's wish that he become War Minister; however, the writer was unable to corroborate this with any other source.

There was no love lost between Campbell-Bannerman and Haldane; Sir Henry suspected that Haldane was the instigator of the Relugas Plot, and was wary of his new War Minister. The War Office was considered a grave for Parliamentary ambitions and Campbell-Bannerman was reputed to have said, "We shall now see how Schopenhauer gets on in the Kailyard."[18]

On 11 December, the new cabinet members went to the palace to accept the seals of office.[19] It was a foggy day and soon after the ceremony the new ministers became lost in the murk. Haldane finally groped his way to the War Office and, exhausted, asked the guard for a glass of water. "Certainly, Sir," came the alert reply, "Irish or Scotch?"[20]

Thus began Haldane's auspicious career as Secretary of State for War. Congratulations poured in. Arnold-Forster wrote, ". . . I see your appointment to the War Office with deep satisfaction. . . . I wish you every success."[21] King

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[18]Ibid., p. 195. Schopenhauer was a nickname Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman used for Haldane, referring to Haldane's translation of Schopenhauer's works into English. Kailyard was a term for barracks yard.

[19]It is interesting at this point to digress and consider the influence of women on the formation of this cabinet. It is quite possible that this government would not have been constituted in the same format had it not been for the actions of three women; Lady Campbell-Bannerman definitely influenced her husband to remain in the Commons, Spender, Vol. II, p. 195. Lady Grey told her husband, "If we had refused office, we could not have justified the decision to the constituents," Grey, Vol. I, p. 61. There is also no doubt that Lady Horner's advice had considerable influence on Haldane, Haldane, p. 190.

[20]Ibid., p. 196.

[21]Arnold-Forster, Memoir, p. 297.

Edward wrote, "Mr. Haldane with sound common sense & great powers of organizing ought to make an excellent War Minister, which is much needed as his predecessor was hopeless."[22]

The new War Minister soon met with his generals. The wary senior officers inquired as to Haldane's plans for the army. The witty War Minister quipped, ". . . I was as a young and blushing virgin just united to a bronzed warrior, and that it was not expected by the public that any result of the union should appear until at least nine months had passed."[23] The generals, having witnessed the army being buffeted about by Haldane's two predecessors, were curious about the new War Minister's aims and qualifications for office. Their attitude is quite understandable. Richard Haldane's credentials were bare of military experience and it would have been difficult to find a minister with a lesser knowledge of military concepts.

Haldane: Scholar, Philosopher, Lawyer

Richard Burdon Haldane was born 30 July 1856, in the Haldane townhouse, a few steps from the house in Edinburgh where five years later Douglas Haig was born.[24] The Haldanes lived mostly in the Scottish countryside at Cloan and were a close-knit, religious family. Richard's father was a

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[22]Harold Nicholson, King George The Fifth, His Life and Reign (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1953), p. 93.

[23]Haldane, p. 196.

[24]Terraine, p. 4.

moderately successful lawyer of some local repute.[25]

Young Richard went to school in Edinburgh and when the family was in residence in Cloan had a private tutor. He was soon steeped in Latin, Greek and the classics. At sixteen he entered the University of Edinburgh and also studied at the University of London.[26]

Even in those early days Haldane nurtured an interest in philosophy and began to read voraciously of Hegel and other German philosophers. In 1874, one of his professors, J.S. Blackie, advised Richard to attend the University of Göttingen to pursue his love of philosophy. There is no doubt that the early years in Göttingen had a profound influence on the young Haldane. His spiritual and intellectual ties with Germany were certainly formed in those student days.[27]

After five month's study, he returned to Cloan and re-entered the University of Edinburgh. His study of Kant, Hegel and Fichte soon earned him his master's degree. He continued toward a doctorate in philosophy, but failed to win approval of his thesis because the professor did not concur with Haldane's doctrines.[28]

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[25]Haldane, p. 4.

[26]Ibid., p. 7.

[27]Ibid., pp. 13-18.

[28]Ibid., pp. 21-23.

It was during these years that Haldane also grew in physical stature. He was a devoted walker, a pastime shared by his brothers, and one time walked seventy-three miles in a day's time.[29]

It had been a foregone conclusion within the family that Haldane would follow his father's footsteps into the legal profession and in 1879, he entered Lincoln's Inn where his long legal career began. Haldane was a careful and able student endowed with an exceptional memory,[30] yet in his first year as a lawyer he earned only £31,10s. By his fourth year, however, he had progressed to an income of £1100.[31] The young lawyer's reputation began to grow and soon Haldane found himself swamped with cases. He was highly regarded in legal circles and was particularly successful with cases involving colonial constitutional law.[32]

At this point in his career Haldane also began to enjoy the material fruits of his labors and he soon became a connoisseur of fine wines, excellent food and smoked only the best cigars.[33]

In 1880, Haldane began his active interest in politics and became associated with the forerunner of the Liberal

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[29]Ibid., pp. 10-11.

[30]Ibid., pp. 34-35.

[31]Ibid., p. 37.

[32]Ibid., pp. 46-47.

[33]Dudley Sommer, Haldane of Cloan: His Life and Times, 1856-1928 (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1960), p. 52.

Imperialist Party. He became a member of the "Eighty" Club, a group of young Liberals who would meet from time to time to discuss the political fortunes of the country.[34] In 1882, he met Herbert Henry Asquith. The two young men found many mutual interests and a great friendship was formed. In 1885, Richard Burdon Haldane stood for Parliament as a Liberal and was elected from East Lothian, a constituency which he continued to represent until he was raised to the peerage in 1911.[35]

Edward Grey soon became a companion of Asquith, Haldane and the group of young Liberals. In 1886, Haldane induced Asquith to stand for Parliament and he was subsequently elected from a neighboring constituency of East Fife.[36]

The young politician began to broaden his social horizons and soon was a welcome guest in the best salons of London society. Lawyer and politician, Haldane did not neglect his first love, philosophy. He became an authority on Schopenhauer and continued on summer trips to Germany to further his research. In 1903, Haldane was invited to deliver the Gifford lectures at the University of St. Andrews, a crowning tribute to Haldane's stature as a philosopher.[37]

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[34]Haldane, p. 86.

[35]Ibid., p. 52.

[36]Ibid., p. 112.

[37]Ibid., p. 98.

This was the Haldane who confronted the Generals: a skilled lawyer, a consummate politician and an avid philosopher; a trained intellect, a scholarly man with tremendous capacity for work.[38] A contemporary writer referred to him as ". . . an intellectual steam engine."[39] Haldane also was an effective orator. He was able to speak for hours and in great detail. His speeches were likened to a ". . . round of beef - you may cut and come again."[40] As an administrator Haldane had few peers.

This unique composite was Richard Haldane, the new Secretary of State for War. Even though he was fated to return to the highest position in the field of law before leaving public service, it was his work for the army that was to bring him his most lasting fame; ironically, the very field for which his background and accomplishments seemed to fit him least.

The Early Days

Haldane immediately launched into the study of army problems; his aim was first to win the confidence of his generals, select his staff, and then cope with needed reforms. Mr. Haldane did not enter the War Office with a pre-formed

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[38] Sommer, p. 102.

[39] A.G. Gardiner, Prophets, Priests and Kings (London: Alston Rivers, Ltd., 1908), p. 205.

[40] Ibid. Haldane's speeches often lasted for many hours. He was not a demonstrative, emotional speaker. His legal training, however, was reflected in his ability to speak logically and factually.

plan. His first task was to seek out the experts to learn from them the problems which confronted the War Office and the army.[41] Haldane soon met with the Chief of Staff who said to him, "At least, Mr. Secretary, you come to these matters with a virgin mind." Haldane retorted, "Yes, and a virgin mind is better than Arnold-Forster's immaculate conceptions."[42]

The astute Esher predicted "The new Secretary of State cannot fail to do well, above all he has determined to walk slowly and has no preconceived ideas. He is adroit, shrewd and exceedingly clever."[43] Esher acted quickly and on the day that Haldane accepted the seals of office, proposed Colonel Gerald Ellison for the post of Haldane's Secretary.[44] Haldane readily admitted his ignorance of military affairs and his need for a highly qualified officer to assist him. He wasted little time in accepting Colonel Ellison as his Secretary.[45] When offered the post, Ellison ". . . asked at once whether Mr. Haldane had any cut and dried plans of his own for the Army. . . ." Lord Esher assured him that Haldane did not. Ellison then offered to do whatever he could to

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[41]Robertson, Vol. I, p. 30.

[42]Sommer, p. 166.

[43]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 132.

[44]Ibid., pp. 126-127. Ellison had served as Secretary of the Esher Committee and was most knowledgeable of army affairs.

[45]Haldane, pp. 196-197.

assist the new War Minister.[46] Ellison and Haldane began a close working relationship and the War Secretary commented, "Ellison proved to be all and more than all I had hoped for."[47]

The War Minister continued to build his staff: Charles Harris became the head of the Financial Department of the War Office;[48] Major General Spencer Ewart was transferred to the War Office and became Director of Military Operations; and Major General Sir William Nicholson became Quartermaster-General. Major General Douglas Haig was brought in later as Director of Military Training and rounded out the team in April 1906.[50]

Haldane then began an intensive course of study. The books of Bronsart von Schellendorf, Von der Goltz, and

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[46]Ernest Merle Teagarden, "The Haldane Army Reforms, 1905-1912" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, Western Reserve University, 1962), pp. 41-42, citing Sir Gerald Ellison, "Reminiscences of Lieutenant-General Sir Gerald Ellison," The Lancashire Lad, Journal of the Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire), XVII (February 1936), p. 1.

[47]Haldane, p. 197.

[48]Ibid., pp. 199-200.

[49]John Charteris, Field-Marshal Earl Haig (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 38.

[50]Terraine, pp. 39-40. The caliber of officers serving on this picked General Staff is reflected in the later careers of these distinguished officers. Nicholson was destined to become the first Chief of the Imperial General Staff; Haig also won the Field-Marshall's baton and led British Forces in World War I; Colonels William Robertson and Sir Henry Wilson, who served on the staff, both became Chiefs of the Imperial General Staff. Actually, Ewart replaced Major General Grierson as Director of Military Operations and Grierson took command of the 1st Division of the British Expeditionary Force. Charteris, p. 38, and Dunlop, p. 262.

Clausewitz, as well as the writings of Ardant du Picq, were closely studied by the new War Minister who steeped himself in the principles enunciated by these authorities of the military profession.[51]

The January elections were approaching and Haldane, taking Ellison with him, went home to Cloan to campaign for re-election. The two men continued their study of army problems working in long sessions that often ended at one or two o'clock in the morning. "Hour after hour we would walk backwards and forwards in a big billiard room, Mr. Haldane on one side of the table smoking the best cigars procurable, I on the other. . . ." wrote Ellison.[52] Haldane soon reduced the problem to its simplest terms, ". . . What must be our objective . . . What was required for its attainment?"[53]

The Military Conversations of 1906

The January elections occupied the center stage while a development of far-reaching consequences to Haldane's plans for the army was waiting in the wings.

On 12 January, Sir Edward Grey met Haldane at

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[51]Haldane, p. 198. Clausewitz, Von der Goltz and du Picq were authorities and writers on military subjects. Bronsart von Schellendorf's book on the German General Staff was considered a military classic.

[52]Terraine, p. 39, quoting from Ellison, Lancashire Lad, XVII (February 1936), p. 1.

[53]Haldane, p. 200.

Berwick.[54] He invited Haldane for a drive and informed the War Minister that the French had indications of a possible German Attack on France in the spring. The question was, Would England support France and had any discussion taken place between the French and British staffs? Even though this news may have surprised Grey and Haldane, the possibility of a war between France and Germany had been explored by some of the army staff.[55]

The assumption was made that Britain would come to the assistance of France. The only question seemed to be whether or not Germany would violate Belgium's neutrality. However, England's participation in a French and German conflict at that time generated only an academic interest.[56]

Edward Grey did not have knowledge of any existing plans between France and England in the event of a German threat,[57] nor is there any evidence that Haldane was anything

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[54]There seems to be a difference of opinions among historians whether this meeting took place on 12 January or 13 January. Maurice, Vol. II, p. 261, states it was the twelfth; Dunlop, p. 236, places the meeting on January 13; Grey, p. 73, and Haldane, p. 202, indicate only that the meeting took place between 10 January and 15 January. Even though the date is not firmly established by British documents, an analysis of other happenings indicates that 12 January was the most probable date.

[55]Haldane, pp. 202-203.

[56]Robertson, Vol. I, pp. 24-26.

[57]Grey, p. 72.

but surprised on that January day.

Haldane also received the following letter:

My dear Richard,

> Persistent reports and little indications keep reaching me that Germany means to attack France in the spring. I don't think these are more than the precautions and flourishes that Germany would naturally make apropos of the Morocco Conference. But they are not altogether to be disregarded. A situation might arise presently in which popular feeling might compel the Government to go to the help of France and you might suddenly be asked what you could do. Fisher says he is ready, by which I take it he means that his ships are so placed that he can drive the German Fleet off the sea and into shelter at any time. I don't want you to give any definite answer in a hurry but I think you should be preparing one.

Yours ever,

E. Grey[58]

Actually the pot had begun to boil earlier. On 28 December Lieutenant-Colonel Charles à Court Repington, the military correspondent of the Times was approached by Major Huguet, the French military attache, who expressed some concern as to what the attitude of England's new government would be in the event of an attack on France by Germany. Repington immediately passed this information on to Grey. The Foreign Minister replied that he did not disavow any agreements Lord Lansdowne, his predecessor, may have had with the

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[58]Maurice, Vol. I, pp. 172-173. This letter indicates a considerable lack of coordination between the War Office, the Admiralty and Foreign Office on matters of contingency planning to support political aims.

French.[59] Repington then consulted with Esher and Clarke of the Imperial Defense Committee. They suggested that Repington prepare a short list of questions concerning Anglo-French military cooperation and submit them to Major Huguet. Lieutenant-Colonel Repington did so and returned the French answers to the committee on 12 January.[60]

On 10 January, Sir Edward Grey recorded a discussion with the French Ambassador, Mr. Paul Cambon, who intimated ". . . that he did not believe that the German Emperor desired war but . . . was pursuing a very dangerous policy."[61] Cambon further iterated that, "It was not necessary . . . that there should be any formal alliance . . . the French government should /however/ know beforehand whether . . . Great Britain would be prepared to render France armed assistance."[62] Grey retorted that in his personal opinion, ". . . England would be strongly moved in favour of France," in the event of a German attack on France.[63] Grey also suggested that

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[59] Great Britain, British Documents on the Origin of the War, 1898-1914 (eds.) G.P. Gooch and H. Temperley, Vol. III; The Testing of the Entente, 1904-1906 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1928), p. 169, hereafter cited "British Documents."

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., p. 170. Letter from Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

unofficial planning between the War Office and the French representatives should take place.

On 11 January, Major-General Grierson was queried on the matter of Anglo-French military commitments. He immediately urged that exploratory conversations between the British and French General Staffs be conducted provided the British government would not be committed to any specific action.[64]

These were the events which had passed prior to Grey and Haldane's meeting during their election respite. The Foreign and War Ministers agreed that before anything further could be done the Prime Minister should be consulted. Haldane then left for London and conferred with Campbell-Bannerman,[65] who ordered that it be made absolutely clear that the conversations between the General Staffs should be noncommittal and that the government would not be bound by them.[66] On 15 January, staff conversations were officially authorized with Major-General Grierson representing the British government. Again, everyone involved was careful to state that neither government would be committed.[67] Haldane also directed Major-General Grierson to initiate a study to determine the best means of supporting the French

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[64] Ibid., pp. 171-173. Memorandum by Lord Sanderson to E. Grey, and letter from Major-General J.M. Grierson to Lord Sanderson.

[65] Haldane, p. 203.

[66] Spender, Vol. II, p. 253.

[67] Great Britain, British Documents, Vol. III, p. 177.

military.[68]

Haldane immediately recognized this as a new problem for the army. Time requirements for mobilization and the size of a striking force became immediate considerations. After all, Britain ". . . had never contemplated the preparation of armies for warfare of the Continental type."[69] Matters continued to progress rapidly.

On 16 January, Grierson wrote Lieutenant-Colonel Barnardiston, the British attache in Belgium, ". . . we are prepared to put in the field. . . . 4 Cavalry Brigades, 2 Army Corps and a division of mounted infantry. . . . The total numbers will be about 105 thousand. . . ."[70] Grierson's estimate proved to be somewhat optimistic. As the British Staff began to evaluate their resources, the estimate of available force was reduced to 80,000 men.[71] The British military structure was not capable of supporting a larger requirement at the time. There was one Army Corps at Aldershot; the remainder of the Regular Army was organized at the

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[68]Haldane, p. 204.

[69]Richard B. Haldane, Before the War (London: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1920), p. 31.

[70]Great Britain, British Documents, Vol. III, p. 179.

[71]Maurice, Vol. II, p. 262.

Battalion and Regimental level and few units of Brigade size existed. There was a shortage of horses, men, artillery and ammunition and the Auxiliaries were more than somewhat disorganized.[72] The best estimate for placing this force of 80,000 men into the field was two months.[73] Sir Edward Grey, informed that 80,000 men were all that was available, commented, ". . . That won't save France unless she can save herself."[74]

The need for a British Expeditionary Force was without a doubt established. The military conversations were the genesis of the Expeditionary Force. The new War Minister had received his "Marching Orders."

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[72]Robertson, Vol. I, pp. 27-28.

[73]Haldane, Before the War, p. 32.

[74]Great Britain, British Documents, Vol. III, p. 178. Letter from Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

CHAPTER III

CREATION OF AN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

The Beginnings

The Liberals' resounding victory at the polls[1] enabled Haldane to devote all his energy to the matter at hand - army reform. The military conversations added a pressing urgency and Haldane applied himself to the problem of providing a striking force for the British Army. He was, however, faced with several political considerations; the victorious Liberals had little interest in the army. The resounding cry was for social reform and the money for these plans would have to come from the army budget.[2] "Army Estimates as in 1899!" was another popular slogan.[3] Haldane was cautioned, "Do not attempt great improvements. The attempt will fail. But concentrate yourself on reducing the estimates." To this the astute War Minister countered, ". . . that economy and efficiency were not incompatible."[4]

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[1]Haldane, An Autobiography, p. 224.

[2]Maurice, Vol. I, p. 178.

[3]Terraine, p. 38.

[4]Haldane, An Autobiography, p. 199.

With these political realities firmly in mind Haldane began to carve out the foundation of the Expeditionary Force. Aided by Ellison and Harris, an objective was determined. German sea power was growing, and the spectre of a Continental war was visible in the far-off distance. The seeds for an England committed to aid an embattled France had already been sown. An expeditionary force which could be mobilized quickly to succor a French army in the event of German attack was, therefore, a prime consideration.[5]

This striking force, of course, did not exist. ". . . Hardly a brigade could have been sent to the Continent without being recast."[6] Nor was there sufficient artillery, transport, or medical support to employ a sizable force. Fifteen days were considered the maximum mobilization time.[7]

The energetic War Minister consulted with his generals and worked ceaselessly. The hard work agreed with Haldane, "I am enjoying myself hugely," he wrote, "The work of thinking out and executing organisation delights me. My Generals are like angels."[8]

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[5]Ibid., p. 200. Lieutenant-Colonel Charles à Court Repington claims credit for coining the term, "Expeditionary Force." Charles à Court Repington, The First World War, 1914-1918 (2 vols.; London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1920), Vol. I, p. 14.

[6]Haldane, An Autobiography, p. 201.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Maurice, Vol. I, p. 171.

A formula soon began to emerge and a general outline of the Expeditionary Force was completed on 29 January 1906.[9] The Expeditionary Force would consist of six large infantry divisions and one cavalry division. This force was to be augmented by artillery, ordnance, supply, medical, and support units.[10]

While Haldane worked on the army problem, the cry for a reduction in estimates swelled; the radical Liberals had to be placated. Haldane was an astute politician and would not be rushed into making precipitate plans or render hasty judgments. This was demonstrated in his speech delivered in Parliament on 8 March 1906, which opened the debate on the 1906-1907 estimates. Launching his army reform campaign with the utmost prudence, caution, and modesty, the War Minister began:

> . . . I address the House with unfeigned diffidence. My predecessors, or many of them, have been people of great military knowledge. Never did a Minister rise to address this House on subjects connected with his Department with less preposition. Whether that is a merit or not, it has at least enabled me to approach the consideration of the questions which I had to face in the beginning of last December with an open mind.[11]

The address continued for nearly three hours. Haldane deftly

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[9]Teagarden, "The Haldane Army Reforms," p. 60, citing a letter from Haldane to his mother, Haldane Papers.

[10]Haldane, An Autobiography, pp. 201-202.

[11]Richard B. Haldane, Army Reform and Other Addresses (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), p. 3, hereafter cited as "Army Reform." This speech may also be found in Parl. Debs., 4, CLIII (1906).

expounded his reform philosophy, at the same time insured that his colleagues understood that these were merely ideas and that time was needed for a full study of the problem. He paid tribute to the ". . . New school of young officers. . . ."[12] He defined the financial problems of the army and the many necessary expenditures which he had inherited due to existing army policies.[13] The costs of maintaining a soldier in the colonial garrisons also were evaluated; the annual cost of maintaining a soldier serving in South Africa was £150,[14] a substantial amount of money in 1906.

Haldane did not fail to pledge his allegiance to the "Blue-Water Principle" for the defense of England.[15]

Reductions were necessary to lower the estimates. Shore defenses came under Haldane's fire and were marked for elimination since the navy was considered fully capable of defending England's coasts.[16] The wastage of unused stores had been discovered by Haldane's probing eye and large stocks of obsolete equipment were to be disposed of. A native regiment at Wei-hai-wei, China, which cost £20,000 a year

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[12]Haldane, Army Reform, p. 4.

[13]Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[14]Ibid., p. 9. £150 equated to approximately $600.

[15]Ibid., pp. 13-15. cf. Maurice Vol. I, p. 179. The Blue-Water Doctrine placed primary reliance on the navy to protect England from invasions, thereby reducing the need for a large "Home Army."

[16]Haldane, Army Reform, p. 14.

upkeep and served no useful purpose, was also sacrificed on the altar of economy.[17]

Haldane then proceeded to provide a masterful insight to his philosophy and military concepts. Contrasting the military problem of Great Britain to that of other nations he proclaimed:

> They have only one war to contemplate on a large scale, and that is with their neighbors across the border. They have to be ready to mobilise and to fight within perhaps ten days from the time of the order being given. Therefore they must be ready. It is absolutely necessary that their reserves should be trained up to the eyes and ready when called upon to take the field at once. But the British Army is not like that. We live on an island, and our coasts are completely defended by the Fleet. Our Army is wanted for purposes abroad and over-seas. It is necessarily a professional Army; we could not get such an Army by conscription. It must be of high quality; but because of the limited nature of its functions -- to strike at a distance -- it ought to be of strictly limited dimensions. Have we ever thought, scientifically and clearly, what these dimensions ought to be? I do not think so. I know that certain things have been worked out, but I do not think the whole problem has been dealt with in its entirety. Here is an island, the striking force of which does not exist for the defence of these coasts -- it does not exist merely for our own insular interests. This island is the centre of an Empire consisting of nearly 12,000,000 square miles and including some 400,000,000 of population, and we have to protect the distant shores of that Empire from the attack of the invader. We want, therefore, an Army which is very mobile and capable

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[17] Ibid., p. 18.

> of rapid transport. For fighting which has to be at a distance and cannot be against large masses of men it ought to be upon a strictly limited scale, and perfect rather in quality than expanded in quantity. There never has been enough careful thinking about this problem. If the Army is not wanted for home defence, then its size is something which is capable of being calculated. The size of the expeditionary force is the principal ingredient in the present cost of the Army.[18]

The War Minister only cursorily touched on militia and volunteer problems; however, he recommended that they should be drawn closer to the Regular Army.[19] He also pointed out the necessity of education for British officers and advanced the idea of a degree in military science.[20] He ended his excellent speech with this disarming comment:

> I have outlined no scheme tonight -- I have merely thrown out ideas which have resulted from such study as I have so far made of the subject. I may be wrong in thinking that progress is possible along those lines; but I do not think I am.[21]

Haldane did not hesitate to warn his colleagues, "Do not force me to handle the Army rapidly. Do not force upon me things which I could not do and which I would rather resign my office than try to do. . . ."[22]

The blueprint of the Haldane reforms was firmly drawn and the faction pressing for a lowering of the estimates had

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[18] Ibid., pp. 24-25. cf. Dunlop, p. 249; Maurice, Vol. I, p. 180; and Parl. Debs., 4, CLIII (1906), pp. 673-675.

[19] Haldane, Army Reform, pp. 28-29.

[20] Ibid., p. 36.

[21] Ibid., p. 38.

[22] Ibid.

been masterfully placated with a reduction of £17,000 from the preceding army budget.[23]

Launching the Expeditionary Force Scheme

There was some grumbling opposition from both the Conservative and Liberal benches. H.O. Arnold-Forster, now a stalwart of the Opposition, objected to Haldane's plan for augmenting and expanding the Regular Army in time of war. The ex-War Minister contended that his scheme of a Home Army was far superior.[24] Balfour pointed out that a reduction of troops was not compatible with the theory of an expandable army.[25]

Rumors of impending troop reductions were soon rife in the House of Commons and at Edward's Court. A rumored cut of ten infantry battalions, a substantial number of artillery batteries and a reduction in colonial troops readily gained currency.[26] Viscount Esher, the loyal watchdog of the army, wrote the King on 1 April 1906, concerning the proposal to reduce the guards, and picturesquely pointed out, "To reduce the Guards Brigade at Aldershot is to knock the point off the spear and to blunt the weapon. . . ."[27]

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[23]Ibid., p. 6. cf. Maurice, Vol. I, p. 181. The 1905-1906 army expenditure was £28,478,863. The Liberals were expecting a reduced estimate of £25,000,000. However, they had to be satisfied with a reduction of £17,000.

[24]Parl. Debs., 4, CLIV (1906), cf. Arnold-Forster, Memoir, pp. 301-306.

[25]Parl. Debs., 4, CLIV (1906), p. 1461.

[26]Maurice, Vol. I, p. 182.

[27]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, pp. 156-157.

He further related that he had discussed this matter with Mr. Haldane and hoped for the best. Nor did the King hesitate in advising the War Minister of the Royal objections to a reduction of the South African garrison.[28] On this point, however, Esher was able to assure his sovereign that if reductions of infantry were to be made in South Africa, the units would be replaced by cavalry.[29]

The possibility of a reduction in artillery also drew the fire of two ex-War Ministers, now turned critics. Mr. Brodrick and Mr. Arnold-Forster both considered artillery a necessary ingredient in England's army, the reduction of which they considered a national calamity.[30]

On 12 July, Mr. Haldane was ready to place his proposals before Commons. The House was packed, the galleries crowded, as he rose to speak. This time there was no polite modesty; confidence and assurance were the keynotes as Haldane began on a somber note,[31] "I believe there is hardly a Member who is not highly convinced that the state of our national Forces is profoundly unsatisfactory."[32] This statement referred both to cost and to organization. Haldane pointed out the need to ". . . restore public confidence in

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[28]Lee, Vol. II, pp. 484-485.

[29]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 154.

[30]Maurice, Vol. I, p. 183.

[31]Dunlop, p. 253.

[32]Haldane, Army Reform, p. 41. This speech is also quoted in its entirety in Parl. Debs., 4, CLX (1906), pp. 1079-1120.

the Army. . . ,"[33] and to make people realize that in their army they are getting fair value for their money. The Army must be reorganized so that it can be efficiently used in war. ". . . An Army shaped for the only purpose for which an Army is needed - the purpose of war."[34] This was Haldane's stated purpose as he began to unfold his plan. He acknowledged the compatibility of economy and efficiency, yet each officer, each soldier, each piece of equipment had to be measured by the yardstick of its value and contribution for war.[35] The War Minister also made it clear that the Regular Army's purpose was for war overseas. The fleet was charged with defense of English coasts.[36]

The Plan is Unveiled

Haldane then unveiled his plan for the Expeditionary Force; the result of four months' study. He proposed an organization of six large infantry divisions, complete with support forces; four cavalry brigades; and artillery. A force of one hundred fifty thousand men, composed of fifty

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[33]Haldane, Army Reform, p. 41.

[34]Ibid., p. 43.

[35]Ibid., p. 46.

[36]Ibid.

thousand Regulars, seventy thousand Reservists and thirty thousand Militia was required to man this organization.[37] Haldane's basic aim was to man the Expeditionary Force with the required infantry, artillery, cavalry, and support services; abolish whatever troops proved excess, and use the monetary surplus to lower the estimates. Only cavalry units were to be excepted from planned reductions.[38]

Artillery was the next consideration. Even though there were ninety-three batteries of field artillery in existence, sufficient manning was available to mobilize only forty-two of them. The new quick-firing guns required larger amounts of ammunition to support them and no provision had been made for this. The state of artillery was an inheritance from Mr. Haldane's two predecessors who complained most loudly about artillery reductions.[39]

Sixty-three artillery batteries with ammunition columns were required to support the Expeditionary Force.

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[37] Ibid., p. 54. Haldane's plan for the Expeditionary Force was without doubt based on the Cardwell system of "linked battalions." Haldane used a twelve-battalion Infantry Division as his base organization. There were sufficient Infantry Battalions in England to provide six divisions leaving a surplus of eight battalions. By 1909, the War Minister perfected the Cardwellian equation, returning eleven battalions from overseas garrisons to England. This leveled the force to seventy-four battalions at home and a like number in the colonies. E.G. Grey, et al., Viscount Haldane of Cloan, O.M., The Man and His Work (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1928), pp. 11-12, hereafter cited as "Viscount Haldane."

[38] Haldane, Army Reform, p. 55. cf. Dunlop, p. 255, and Sommer, p. 173.

[39] Haldane, Army Reform, pp. 56-57.

To fully man these batteries, Haldane proposed the dissolution of the Militia Royal Garrison Artillery. The transfer of the coast defense mission to the Navy made this artillery arm surplus. Thirty-six additional batteries would be formed to provide training and reserve function. The older guns were to be issued to Volunteers, a significant departure from previous concepts.[40] In addition, ten horse artillery batteries were slated to join the Expeditionary force providing a total of seventy-three artillery batteries for Haldane's envisioned "Strike Force."[41] The revamped artillery structure, claimed Haldane, would reduce estimates by £300,000 annually.[42]

Disposing of the artillery problem, the War Minister turned to the infantry. Seventy-two infantry battalions were required for the proposed six divisions. The Guards would furnish six battalions; the remaining sixty-six battalions were to be provided from the Infantry of the Line.[43] The eight surplus battalions of the Line and two Guard battalions were to be disbanded.[44] Haldane's plan further provided for the withdrawal of three infantry battalions from South Africa

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[40] Ibid., pp. 62-63.

[41] Ibid., p. 66.

[42] Ibid., p. 63.

[43] Ibid., pp. 65-66.

[44] Ibid., p. 72.

to be replaced by a cavalry regiment.[45]

The Line Infantry Regiments identified for dissolution were the

> Third and fourth battalions of the Northumberland Fusiliers, the third and fourth battalions of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, the third and fourth battalions of the Lancashire Fusiliers, and the third and fourth battalions of the Manchester Regiment.[46]

The Guard battalions to be disbanded were the third battalion of the Scots Guards and the 3d Coldstreams.[47]

Mr. Haldane also clarified his policies on enlistment. The Infantry term of service would be seven years with the colors, and five with the Reserves; the Guards would continue to serve three and nine; and the Cavalry soldier was obligated to seven and five. Artillery units would serve for six years with the colors and six in the Reserves with the exception of Garrison Artillery, which would be enlisted for a term of eight and four years.[48]

Having completed his recommendations for the Regular components of the army, Haldane proceeded to discuss the

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[45] Ibid., p. 76.

[46] Ibid., p. 77. All of these units were considerably under-strength. The eight battalions combined were nearly 1200 men short.

[47] Ibid., pp. 75-76. The 3d Coldstreams were not to be disbanded until a tour of duty in Egypt was completed. Later considerations saved this battalion from dissolution.

[48] Ibid., p. 78.

Auxiliary Force. The Militia, Volunteers and Yeomanry were to be measured with the same yardstick as the Regular Army, "What purpose do you serve in war?"[49]

The Auxiliaries had become an expensive luxury during the last ten years. The Militia had decreased in strength to ninety thousand men, yet its annual cost had increased by £480,000. The Yeomanry, now numbering 25,000, had more than doubled during the same period and cost an additional £420,000 a year.[50] To the Militia, Haldane threw down the gauntlet, ". . . Either fall back into Volunteer work . . . or else they must take upon themselves the same obligation as the regular soldier . . . to serve abroad in time of war."[51] The functions of the Volunteers were also defined: to man the coastal defenses when Regular troops went to war, to repel raids, and to act as a pseudo-reserve for the Regular Army.[52] Firm in his proposals for the Regular Army, the shrewd War Minister was not yet ready to fully outline his plans for the Auxiliary Forces, "We are still in a state of consideration about the Auxiliary Forces. . ."[53] Haldane stated. An army of greater strength

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[49] Ibid., p. 82.

[50] Ibid., p. 83.

[51] Ibid., p. 84.

[52] Ibid., p. 87.

[53] Ibid., p. 92.

at a lesser cost was the ultimate goal.[54]

Action and Reaction

The speech was a success. Opposition was light and disorganized. Balfour was instrumental in restraining some of the Opposition when he stated, "We had failed to produce an acceptable scheme of Army reform. Haldane must be given his chance."[55]

There was, however, a conservative attempt to block Haldane's program. On 19 July, F.E. Smith arose in the House of Commons and moved for adjournment, based on ". . . the avowed intention of His Majesty's government to commence forthwith reductions in His Majesty's armed forces which have not received the sanction of Parliament."[56] This attempt by the opposition was firmly defeated. Lord Esher records, "The politicians . . . debated his /Haldane's/ breeches of faith, and other silly political shibboleths, fixing as politicians always do on immaterial points."[57]

Haldane had placated his party with reductions in the army. He fought now with closed ranks, and the opposition

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[54] Ibid., p. 93.

[55] Maurice, Vol. I, p. 188.

[56] Parl. Debs., 4, CLX (1906), p. 418.

[57] Brett (ed.), Vol. II, pp. 171-172.

crumbled. It was time to translate theory into reality.

Haldane published his Memorandum on Army Reorganization on 30 July. This memorandum contained, in essence, the main points of his 12 July speech. There were, however, a few changes. In his speech Haldane had referred to a Militia elements of thirty thousand men to round out the Expeditionary Force; this force was now displaced by 3,240 Yeomanry, 10,337 Artillerists, 2,425 Engineers and 10,775 Army Service Corps personnel. These were all referred to as "non-Regular." In addition, there were some 4,000 medical, veterinary and ordnance personnel. Also, the memorandum clarified the position of Militia Infantry. Battalions of Militia Infantry were to be trained as units and it was hoped that they would be sent overseas in that configuration.[58]

Haldane wisely elected to enact his proposals for the Expeditionary Force without legislation.[59] The actual reductions were implemented by Army Order 235 on 1 October. With the aid of Haldane's staff, Ellison, Nicholson, Ewart, Generals Douglas and Haig, the British Expeditionary Force became a reality on 12 January 1907, by Special Army Order which established the new organization.[60]

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[58] Dunlop, pp. 259-260, citing Command Paper 2993 of 1906.

[59] Ibid., p. 261.

[60] Ibid., see Appendix A.

Haldane had accomplished the first milestone in his plan for the reform of the British Army. The Expeditionary Force was assembled and trained in the three year period that followed. A small force by Continental standards, the British Expeditionary Force was honed into a high quality professional fighting unit. In 1914, when the call came, the British Expeditionary Force was deployed to France in the planned period of twelve days.[61]

It was on French soil that the "Old Contemptibles" earned the respect of friend and foe alike, and in their blood etched the word Valor into the tableau of British Army history.

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[61]Grey, et al., Viscount Haldane, p. 11.

CHAPTER IV

THE FORMATION OF THE GENERAL STAFF

Antecedents

Haldane is often credited with the creation of the British General Staff. It would be more accurate, however, to state that Haldane translated theories into practice because it was he who made the General Staff a functioning body and furnished Britain's army with a "Thinking Department."[1]

General Staffs, in some form, have existed as long as there have been armies. Julius Ceasar was surrounded by a group of generals and aides who transmitted and carried out his orders; Alexander the Great had a staff of sorts; Frederick the Great had an extremely efficient staff system; and Napoleon Bonaparte had an excellent staff headed by the famous General Berthier.[2] It was, however, the Prussians who created a General Staff along modern lines and used it as an instrument of victory. The German successes of 1870 were directly creditable to the brilliance and the organizational capability of the Prussian General Staff.[3] The French, who

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[1]Haldane, Army Reform, p. 23.

[2]Gordon, p. 95.

[3]Ibid., p. 96.

fell victim to this splendid organization, immediately took steps to create a similar General Staff, The État-Major.[4]

Nor was the staff idea entirely new in Britain. As early as 1645, a Headquarters Staff headed by a Commander-in Chief was in existence. This group consisted of a small number of officers and civilians who represented basic military support functions, such as Supply, Finance, Judge Advocacy, Chaplaincy, Administration, and Medicine.[5]

Wellington also possessed an efficient and well organized staff; however, the staffs of the early British Army were primarily composed of specialists and did not function as either a planning or a policy-making organization.[6] Nor is there evidence that any selection criteria was applied in order to obtain the best possible officers to serve in staff capacities. A Commander often selected his staff from his circle of friends or members of his family, who were personally congenial and not necessarily had ability to perform their duties.[7]

The first concrete proposal for a British Staff formed along modern lines was made in 1890 by Lord Hartington in his report on the findings of the Hartington Commission. He

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[4] Ibid.

[5] J.D. Hittle, The Military Staff, Its History and Development (Harrisburg: The Military Service Publishing Co., 1944), p. 114.

[6] Ibid., pp. 123-125.

[7] Sheppard, p. 481.

recommended the creation of a General Staff headed by a Chief of Staff and organized in a manner similar to the staffs then existing in the armies of major European powers.[8] Unfortunately, this report was weakened by a strong conservative attitude prevalent in the army of Victoria. The Duke of Cambridge was distrustful of any reform or change in the existing army and the aging queen shared and supported his opinions.[9] The strength of Hartington's recommendation was further diluted by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman who, as a member of the Hartington Commission, submitted a dissenting minority report.[10]

There were, however, individuals who realized Britain's desperate need for a General Staff organized along German lines. On the same day that the Hartington Commission Report was signed, Spenser Wilkinson published his book, The Brain of an Army.[11] Mr. Wilkinson explained the workings of the General Staff system in detail but more than that he grasped the importance of organized command translated into effective and efficient application of military power. The book served to popularize the General Staff concept among both civilians and military officers.[12] The

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[8] Amery, pp. 292-293. In Appendix P of his book, Amery has reprinted a sizable extract from the Hartington Commission report.

[9] Supra, p. 16.

[10] Amery, pp. 293-294.

[11] Spenser Wilkinson, The Brain of an Army (2d ed.; London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1913), p. 5.

[12] Hittle, pp. 132-133.

great German General, Moltke, expressed surprise that a mere civilian, and an Englishman at that, was able to capture and aptly describe the functioning of the General Staff system.[13]

The influence of The Brain of an Army was not limited to England. Some of the roots of the American General Staff can also be traced to Wilkinson's work.[14] The title, The Brain of an Army, was particularly appropriate since the German General Staff was indeed the intellect of German military power.[15]

The German Model

The history of the Prussian staff can be traced to 1655, when the Great Elector of Brandenburg appointed a Generalquartiermeister. This officer's position was similar to that of a Chief of the General Staff, however, he was not charged with the manifold responsibilities which were later attached to this post.[16] In 1796, a Cartographic Section was attached to the staff and other military functions were added as they were found necessary to provide coordinated staff action.[17] In 1815, the German Staff was divided into two separate parts. Der Grosse Generalstab functioned at Berlin while the remaining Truppen-Generalstab served with

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[13]Wilkinson, pp. 9-11.

[14]Hittle, p. 178.

[15]Ibid., pp. 131-132.

[16]Charles à Court Repington, Imperial Strategy (London: John Murray, 1906), p. 137.

[17]Ibid., p. 138.

the troops.[18] At first there was only a limited number of officers serving in this select organization. During the tenure of General Müffling, who served as Chief of the German General Staff from 1821 to 1829, only forty-six officers served with this elite group. In 1870, when Germany mobilized against France, the staff had increased to 109 officers,[19] and by 1890, the Prussian General Staff had grown to a total of 200 officers. Ninety of these served with staffs of the divisions in the Army Corps whereas the remainder were members of the Great General Staff at Berlin.[20]

The German staff corps was an aristocracy of talent in every respect. They were an elite group separate from the remainder of the army, wearing distinctive uniforms, special insignia and their accelerated promotions issued directly from the Chief of Staff of the Army.[21] Only the elite were chosen for duty with the General Staff. Each year only the top handful of graduates of the Kriegs Akademie (Staff College) were selected for duty with the Staff. After a year's service, these junior officers were returned to their regiments and continued rotating between staff and regimental

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[18] Ibid., Der Grosse Generalstab is translated literally as the great general staff. Der Truppen-Generalstab translates general staff of troops.

[19] Ibid., p. 139.

[20] Wilkinson, p. 134.

[21] Ibid., pp. 131-133.

assignments as long as they showed progress.[22]

There is no doubt that Der Grosse Generalstab represented the epitome of organized military command function in the early 1900's. However, neither Wilkinson nor members of the British military wanted an exact replica of the German Staff; rather, they wanted a staff tailored to British needs incorporating certain German concepts.[23] It remained for the investigations which followed the South African War to provide the spur for further action. The Esher Committee reported that the lack of planning, of preparation and of trained staff officers during the Boer campaign ". . . gravely prejudiced the conduct of operations in South Africa."[24] Viscount Esher's reconsideration to replace the office of Commander-in Chief with a General Staff began a ripple of change in the "ostrich like" attitude of the War Office.

The General Staff

In December of 1903, Viscount Esher advised Prime Minister Balfour, "If Arnold-Forster is wise he . . . will throw all his energy into the creating of a . . . General Staff. . . ."[25] The War Minister, H.O. Arnold-Forster did

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[22] Ibid., p. 136. cf. Repington, Imperial Strategy, pp. 141-145.

[23] Ibid., pp. 137-166. cf. Hittle, p. 135. This short sketch of the German staff is necessary as it provides the roots from which the British staff grew.

[24] Ibid., p. 133. cf. Repington, Imperial Strategy, p. 147.

[25] Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 33. Again Esher exhibited his perspicacity in matters of army reform.

not see fit to pay heed to this advice until almost his final hour in the War Office. It is true that under his regime and as a result of findings of the Esher Committee, a Chief of the General Staff had replaced the office of Commander-in Chief.[26] However, as of yet the head did not have a body. On 11 November 1905, Arnold-Forster published a memorandum which was addressed to the Chief of the General Staff. The memorandum laid a framework for the establishment of a British General Staff.[27]

The major provisions of Arnold-Forster's recommendations were as follows: General Staff officers were to be selected on the basis of their personal qualifications. Only a small number of officers should be initially selected. A General Staff appointment was to be for four years and at the end of this period the officer would be considered for retention on the General Staff list. Accelerated promotion would be the reward for distinguished General Staff service.

Arnold-Forster further outlined a list of duties for General Staff officers. He insisted that the General Staff would not be constituted as a separate corps as was the Prussian staff design; it was desired that officers selected for the General Staff were graduates of the Staff College, but

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[26] Supra., p. 23.

[27] H.O. Arnold-Forster, Military Needs and Military Policy (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1909), pp. 195-207, hereafter cited as "Military Needs." cf. Repington, Imperial Strategy, pp. 155-160.

this was not a mandatory requirement. Initially, an individual's Army rank in relation to length of service would not affect appointment to the staff. General Staff promotions were to be controlled by the Chief of the General Staff and the officers of the General Staff would be directly responsible to him.[28]

With this memorandum Arnold-Forster provided a basic foundation for a General Staff system in Britain. Whether or not Arnold-Forster could have translated his theories into policy must remain conjecture as he was destined to leave office within a month's time.[29]

Lord Hartington, Spenser Wilkinson, Viscount Esher, and Colonel Repington had brought the need for a General Staff to the attention of the English government and the English people. The oft maligned Arnold-Forster had outlined a framework upon which the staff could be built, yet the task of completion, and of implementation fell to his successor, Haldane.[30]

Viscount Esher, as was typical of him, wasted little time in making his views on General Staff organization known to the new War Minister. Only eight days after Haldane had taken office, Lord Esher wrote a detailed letter in which he

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[28] Ibid. Arnold-Forster's reprint of his memorandum supplemented by Repington's interpretation provides an excellent source for the 1905 General Staff Memorandum.

[29] Supra, p. 31.

[30] Gordon, p. 98.

presented his views and concepts for a British Staff.[31] Esher was not as impressed with the German system as some of his contemporaries. He wrote, "No foreign system is applicable to the insular peculiarities of our Army. . . ."[32] The General Staff must have sufficient flexibility to provide for expansion in time of war. He further recommended that qualified officers should be placed on a General Staff list even though some of them were being utilized in other duties. He advised Haldane to select General Staff officers on a probationary term for one year, at the end of which time their appointments could be confirmed by the Chief of the General Staff, and that those officers who had not attended a Staff College be sent to the school after they were placed on the General Staff list.[33]

The military voice of the Times, Colonel Repington, also let it be known that he favored ". . . the spirit and not the letter of the German General Staff. . . ."[34]

Haldane, knowing that Campbell-Bannerman had previously opposed the General Staff idea, shrewdly laid the groundwork for his plans in his speech to the House of Commons on 8 March 1906. He discussed the problems of the

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[31]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, pp. 129-130.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Charles à Court Repington, Vestigia, Reminiscences of Peace and War (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909), p. 259, hereafter cited "Vestigia."

South African War and then continued:

> Unlike the other great nations, we had never established any thinking department for the British Army. If there had been such a thinking department it would have made out plans for the operations in South Africa . . . Those who have read the account of the Japanese campaign will know the profound advantage of a thinking department embodied in the General Staff. The late Government . . . laid the foundation of a General Staff. We have got to work it out. . . .[35]

Haldane relied heavily on the assistance of Colonel Ellison and General Ewart, his Director of Military Operations, in the formulation of the General Staff plan.[36] Before reaching any final conclusions, however, the War Minister felt that he would like to see the German Army firsthand. He "managed" an invitation from the German Emperor for himself and Ellison and on August 29, 1906, arrived in Germany.[37] Mr. Haldane and Colonel Ellison were impressed by what they saw, particularly, the efficient functioning of the German Staff. The neatly compartmented support functions were particularly impressive.[38] However, the principle which had the most profound influence on Haldane and was clearly reflected in his later creation of the General Staff, was a clear division of the functions

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[35]Haldane, Army Reform, p. 23.

[36]Haldane, An Autobiography, pp. 214-215.

[37]Ibid., cf. Sommer, p. 179.

[38]Haldane, An Autobiography, pp. 220-221.

of command, training, and war operations from that of administration.[39]

The Secretary of State for War continued his practice of drawing from the experts. He consulted with Spenser Wilkinson, a recognized "staff" authority[40] and the ever present Esher also continued inundating Haldane with his advice. Lord Esher contended that it was of major importance that the General Staff undergo a thorough and continual training program. This staff must be ". . . trained specially to deal with large questions of preparation for war. . . ."[41]

On 12 September 1906, Haldane established the General Staff through means of an Army Order and a memorandum which he had personally written.[42] In this staff memorandum, Mr. Haldane made it clear that a General Staff would not appear overnight but that it would take time to train and establish such an instrument. He further stated that the General Staff, as an organization, must remain flexible and

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[39]Grey, et al., Viscount Haldane, p. 10. Arnold-Forster later attempted to establish the fact that Haldane's visit to Germany had no influence on the formation of the British Staff. He claimed that Haldane prepared the General Staff Order prior to his trip and made no further changes before it was published in September 1906. Arnold-Forster, Military Needs, pp. 192-193. Mr. Haldane claimed the contrary. Infra., p. 87. A detailed examination of the General Staff Order, however, weights the argument in Haldane's favor and suggests Mr. Arnold-Forster might have been suffering from "sour grapes."

[40]Spenser Wilkinson, Thirty-Five Years, 1874-1909 (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1933), pp. 305-306.

[41]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 166.

[42]Sommer, p. 175.

that changes may need to be made as the requirements of England and the Army change.[43] "The General Staff," Haldane wrote, "will be judged by the men it produces."[44] The memorandum further contained a hint of future plans. ". . . There is no reason," stated Haldane, "why its [the General Staff's] influence should not extend ultimately far beyond these shores and India."[45]

The Army Order was very similar to Mr. Arnold-Forster's memorandum. The General Staff was divided into two functions: a General Staff at Army Headquarters and a General Staff serving in commands and districts. The Headquarters Staff would function as a policy-making body concerning itself with military training, staff duties and military operations. War planning, collection of intelligence, as well as the preparation of maps, codes and cyphers were also placed under the purview of this select group.[46]

The General Staff serving in the field was charged with advising the commanders and the staffs of the units they were serving, particularly in matters of professional education of officers and the training of troops. The Field Staff was

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[43] The Times (London), September 13, 1906. This shows a clear reflection of the Esher influence.

[44] Ibid. The Times carried a complete reprint of Haldane's Memorandum as well as the General Staff Order in its 13 September issue.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid. cf. A.R. Godwin-Austen, The Staff and the Staff College (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1927), pp. 243-244.

also responsible for insuring that the policy prescribed by Army Headquarters was carried out.[47]

General Staff officers were to be selected from officers who were ". . . considered most likely to prove capable of forming a school of progressive military thought."[48] These officers would be placed on an unpublished General Staff list and posted to the staff as vacancies occurred. Appointments were to be for four years. At the end of that time an officer below the substantive rank of Lieutenant-Colonel would be returned to his regiment for a one year period. The first year of staff service was to be probationary and officers below the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, who were not Staff College graduates, would be sent to the Staff College after the completion of the four years of General Staff service. Officers who distinguished themselves on the Staff would be identified for accelerated promotion and brevetted up to and including the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.[49]

Appendix A to the General Staff Order contained a detailed list of Staff duties, covering the areas of military training, military education and military operations.[50]

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[47] The Times (London), September 13, 1906.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid. The General Staff Order, after close inspection, reveals a considerable German influence particularly in the dichotomy of staff organization. The framework of Arnold-Forster, the suggestions of Viscount Esher as well as the concepts enunciated by Spenser Wilkinson and General Bronsart von Schellendorf (Der Dienst des Generalstabes), are clearly in evidence.

Initially, the General Staff at Army Headquarters was provided with an authorization of fifty-seven officers including three Major-Generals, six Colonels, twenty-one Lieutenant-Colonels and Majors and twenty-seven Staff Captains. The portion of the Staff which was to be posted in the commands and districts was authorized one Major-General, six Brigadier-Generals, sixteen Colonels, fifty-four Lieutenant-Colonels and Majors, twelve Staff Captains and twenty-five Brigade Majors, a total of 114 officers. This table of authorization provided an aggregate of 171 officers' billets on the British General Staff.[51]

Reactions to the General Staff Order were mixed. Colonel Repington hailed the British General Staff as a ". . . graft upon the rebel British stem, the greatest product of the schools of Berthier and of Moltke. . . ."[52] Arnold-Forster raised great "hue and cry." He proclaimed that the General Staff had been his creation and that he had been deprived of the honor and the credit to which he was entitled,[53] an argument he continued to pursue in a number of books which he wrote in the years that followed.

The majority of the Army welcomed its new "brain." However, there were some senior regimental officers who resented

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Repington, Vestigia, p. 259.

[53] Arnold-Forster, Military Needs, pp. 193-208.

Headquarters interference with their commands. This group was in the minority and the General Staff soon became a respected institution and junior and senior officers alike competed freely for the choice posts.[54]

The War Minister openly admitted the General Staff had not been an original idea with him. In a speech on 15 September at Newcastle-on-Tyne, Mr. Haldane stamped the Staff idea "Made in Germany."[55] He credited the Hartington Commission, the Esher Committee, and his predecessor, Mr. Arnold-Forster, with their contributions. The Army Council also came in for a share of the plaudits for the creation of this staff. Further, Mr. Haldane pointed out that there were ". . . many things that would not have been there unless we had had repeated and frequent conversations with the German General Staff."[56]

There is no doubt that many must share the credit for the creation of a British General Staff, yet it was Haldane who took an idea which had been smoldering in the War Office for sixteen years, and brought it to fruition.[57] Nor was the War Minister content with this accomplishment as he clearly foresaw the need to expand the "Thinking Department" of the British Army to encompass the military forces of the

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[54]Godwin-Austen, pp. 245-246.

[55]The Times (London), September 15, 1906.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Repington, Vestigia, pp. 259-260.

entire Empire.

The Imperial General Staff is Created

As the Secretary of State for War became more and more deeply engrossed in the military affairs of the British Empire, it became obvious to him that the dominions were destined to play a greater role in the defense of the Empire.[58] In order to incorporate dominion forces into the defense scheme, it was necessary to provide for uniform training methods, standard organization, and professional military education for the officers. Haldane set Generals Nicholson and Haig to the task of working out proposals to achieve these aims.[59]

In 1907, an Imperial Conference of Premiers was held in London. It was at this meeting that Haldane presented a resolution asking for military cooperation and requesting that priority should be given to the establishment of an Imperial General Staff. Haldane addressed the colonial delegates and pointed out the need for common organization, standardized training methods, and explained the benefits that could be derived by all the member nations if an Imperial General Staff were instituted.[60] He let it be known

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[58]Donald C. Gordon, The Dominion Partnership in Imperial Defense (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), p. 272. cf. Dunlop, pp. 295-296.

[59]Terraine, p. 43.

[60]D.C. Gordon, pp. 272-273.

that the functions of command and administration were to be retained by the dominion government concerned. The General Staff would function as an advisory agency at the request of the respective government and would concern itself primarily with planning, organization, and training of the Empire forces.[61] The conferees accepted and approved the proposals of the Secretary of State for War and requested that a memorandum be prepared for their consideration which outlined in detail the workings of an Imperial General Staff.[62]

General Sir W.G. Nicholson, Chief of the British General Staff, immediately began to prepare this memorandum and submitted it on 17 December 1908. This document stressed uniformity and standardization of strategic concepts and training. General Nicholson went even further and established the requirement that all officers identified for service with the Imperial General Staff would have to be graduates of the Staff College. The Staff College at Camberley was designated as the primary military professional school of the Empire.[63]

Nicholson further proposed an interchange of officers and frequent communication between Chiefs of the Dominion

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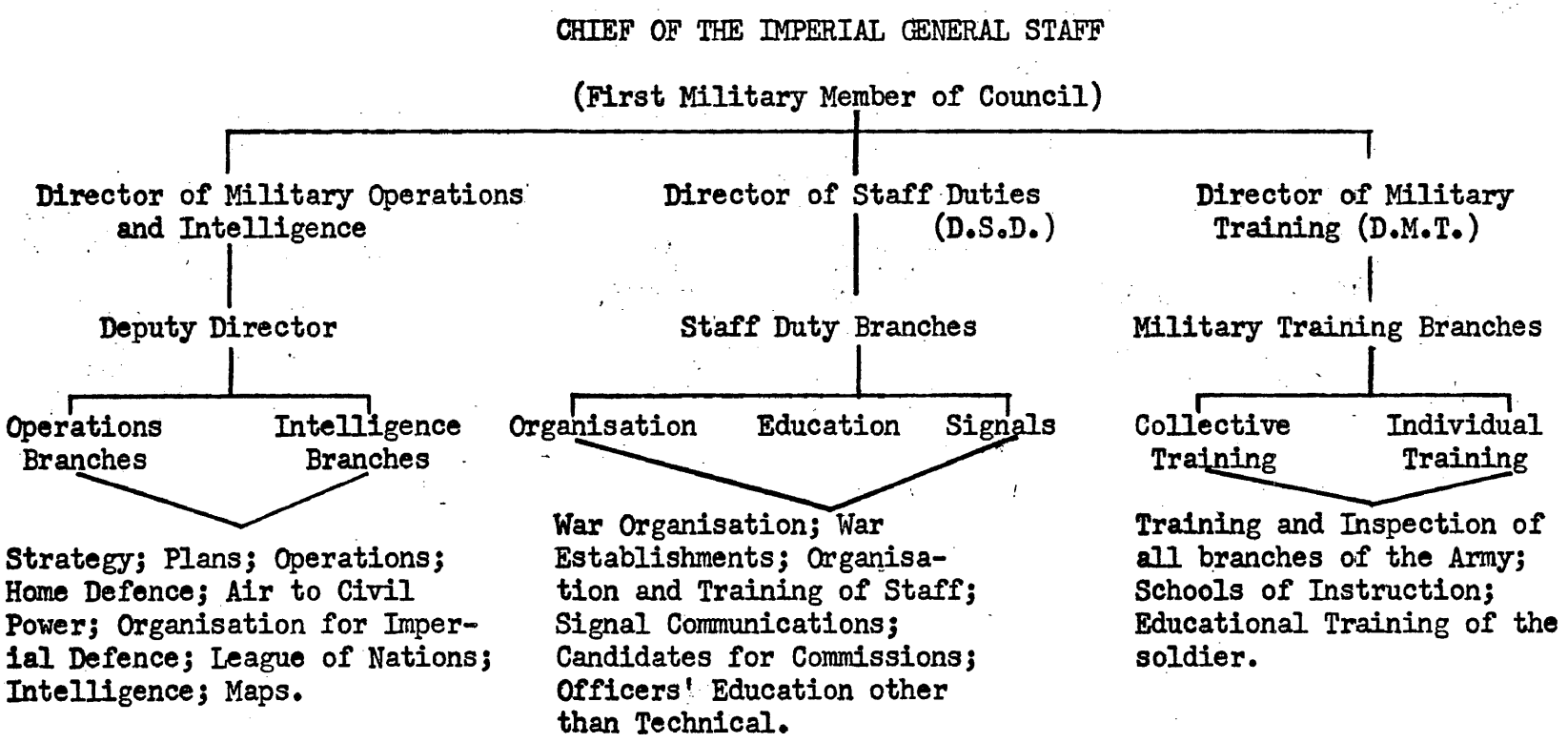
[61] Ibid. cf. Teagarden, p. 126.

[62] Hittle, pp. 134-135; D.C. Gordon, p. 274; Teagarden, p. 127.

[63] Hittle, p. 135; D.C. Gordon, p. 275. The Prussian approach of developing the staff as a "military intellect" is reflected in Nicholson's proposals.

TABLE 3

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF
THE IMPERIAL GENERAL STAFF*



*Hampden Gordon, The War Office (London: Putnam, 1935), p. 117.

Staffs and the Imperial General Staff in London.[64]

This memorandum was presented by Haldane before the Imperial Defense Conference which met in London in July of 1909. The Dominion representatives accepted Haldane's proposals wholeheartedly and thus joined in a partnership for defense with the Mother Country. In November of 1909, the title of Chief of the General Staff was changed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and General Sir William Nicholson became the first incumbent of that office.[65]

The establishment of the Imperial Staff won wide-spread approval. Repington, even though he was not entirely pleased with the work of the staff in the field, voiced his wholehearted approval.[66] General Haig indicated that the creation of the Imperial General Staff ". . . puts 50% onto the value of the General Staff."[67]

In the remaining years preceeding World War I, the fruits of coordinated staff planning on an Imperial scale were soon realized. The Imperial General Staff was a logical outgrowth from the British General Staff, but the laurels for its creation belong to Haldane and those who labored with him.

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[64]Dunlop, p. 297.

[65]Ibid., p. 298. Haldane, An Autobiography, pp. 213-214.

[66]Jay Luvaas, The Education of an Army, British Military Thought, 1815-1940 (London: Cassell, 1965), p. 312.

[67]Terraine, p. 44.

CHAPTER V

THE SECOND LINE

The Origins of the Second Line

One of the most difficult problems that confronted the Secretary of State for War in his mission of army reform was the revamping of the Auxiliary Forces. The responsibilities of the Militia, Yeomanry and Volunteers were not clearly defined and they existed under a "hodgepodge" of legal and political restrictions which made them a costly luxury.[1] These semi-trained military establishments riddled with tradition, prejudices, and special interest groups did not fit the Haldane formula of economy and efficiency.[2]

It was in the smoke-filled library at Cloan in the first months of the War Minister's term of office where the idea for a Territorial Army was spawned by the fertile minds of Haldane and Ellison. They clearly foresaw the necessity of an organized, defined force, a Second Line to back the Expeditionary Force,[3] a military force which could be expanded into a larger army if required.

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[1]Maurice, Vol. I, pp. 204-205; Lee, Vol. II, p. 494; Grey, et al., Viscount Haldane, pp. 8-9.

[2]Haldane, An Autobiography, p. 199.

[3]Dunlop, p. 366; Teagarden, pp. 148-149.

The Volunteers had only limited equipment; the Militia did not fit any pattern of organization; and the Yeomanry was a tradition ridden, semi-trained, mounted corps officered by country gentlemen. It was Haldane's aim to take these diverse forces, transgress the boundaries of tradition and politics and mold them into a usable fighting force.[4]

In January of 1906, Haldane dispatched his first memorandum to the Army Council which outlined his basic scheme for a Territorial Army built from the Militia, Volunteers and Yeomanry.[5] This force was to be administered by county associations similar to those which Cromwell had used.[6] Unlike his predecessors, Haldane proceeded slowly. He formed a committee in May of 1906 which Lord Esher chaired. The Territorial Force Committee was composed of forty-five prominent Regular Army, Militia, and Volunteer officers. The purpose of "The Duma," as it was nicknamed, was to determine if the Auxiliary Forces could be established by agreement in preference to legislation.[7] Among the more prominent members of this committee were Lord Roberts and Lord Methuen, both Regular Army officers, Lord Lovat, the Duke of Bedford, and Colonel J.E.B. Seely, who was destined to become Haldane's successor.[8]

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[4]Haldane, An Autobiography, pp. 205-206.

[5]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, pp. 205-206.

[6]Dunlop, p. 266.

[7]Ibid., Maurice, Vol. I, p. 206. The "Duma" was a Russian attempt at a parliamentary body.

[8]Ibid., Dunlop, pp. 267-268.

The committee did not reach a decision, nor did it publish a formal report. Their efforts, however, were not entirely wasted. They worked out a detailed plan for utilizing the county associations to perform the administrative functions for a Territorial Force. They decided that the Territorial Army would be composed of Yeomanry, Volunteers and Cadet Corps. The aloof Militia were, for the time being, excluded as they did not come to terms.[9] It soon became evident to Haldane that he would not be able to establish the Territorial Army by agreement; legislation would be necessary.[10]

King Edward VII was a stout proponent of the Territorial scheme.[11] However, when Haldane neglected to inform the sovereign as to whom he had placed on this committee he received a stern rebuke. Haldane did not risk the King's friendship and support in this matter again.[12]

It was no easy task to unravel the complex ties of political influence and tradition which bound the Auxiliary establishment; the roots were too deeply entwined with the history of Britain.

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[9]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, pp. 167-169.

[10]Dunlop, p. 269.

[11]Lee, Vol. II, p. 495.

[12]Ibid., p. 500.

The Militia

The Militia, the "Old Constitutional Force," was formed for home defense in the sixteenth century. It fought with distinction during the French invasion of 1690 and later was called upon ". . . to deal with the Jacobite rising. . . ."[13] In the early 1800's the Militia was granted a semi-Regular status and in 1848, was again revived as a Volunteer force. The "Constitutional Force" was not liable for service abroad, however, many of its officers and men volunteered for service during the Peninsular War and in Crimea. During the Boer War, the Militia furnished ". . . more than 45,000 officers and men. . . ."[14]

The Militia's role had continually been one of re-enforcement for the Regular contingents. Lord Lansdowne said of it, ". . . It was plundered at one end by the Line and encroached upon at the other by the Volunteers."[15] By 1906, this proud force numbered 98,000 men, approximately 40,000 less than authorized.[16]

The Yeomanry

The Yeomanry traced its origin to 1761, but it was

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[13]Gordon, p. 86.

[14]Ibid., p. 87.

[15]Grey, et al., Viscount Haldane, p. 8, cf. Haldane, An Autobiography, p. 205.

[16]Gordon, p. 87.

not utilized until the French Revolutionary Wars.[17] They were a form of volunteer cavalry, largely drawn from rural and agricultural areas and officered by the landed gentry.[18] The law provided that the Yeomanry could be called up in the event of "imminent national danger and great emergency."[19] As a result, the Imperial Yoomanry furnished over 27,000 men during the Boer War and were used with success as mounted infantry.[20]

The Volunteers

The Volunteers were of more recent vintage. In 1802, when a Napoleonic invasion threatened, England responded with a Volunteer Force of 40,000 men, however, as danger lessened this force rapidly deteriorated.[21] In 1859, when danger again threatened England, patriots formed all over the country. They drilled and organized themselves; the expense was borne primarily by their commanding officers. This force continued in being and over 20,000 men served in the South African War.[22]

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[17]E.K.G. Sixsmith, "Reserve and Auxiliary Forces: Some Former Controversies," Army Quarterly, (April 1966), pp. 1-2. This article was furnished by the author in proof form and was scheduled for publication in April 1966. Therefore, page references may not coincide with the actual publication copy.

[18]Ibid., W.H. Goodenough and J.C. Dalton, The Army Book for the British Empire (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1893), pp. 374-376.

[19]Sixsmith, p. 2.

[20]Grey, et al., Viscount Haldane, p. 9.

[21]Gordon, pp. 88-89.

[22]Ibid., cf. Goodenough and Dalton, pp. 379-381.

The Volunteer Force, due to its nature, was composed mostly of infantry with a sprinkling of artillery and engineers and was confined to the battalion level.[23] The government provided arms and ammunition and a capitation grant of thirty-eight shillings per man. This was hardly sufficient and a large financial burden was placed on the commanding officers of these Volunteer units.[24] The task of amalgamating these units, each with its own proud history, would most likely have discouraged a lesser man than Haldane, who continued to tenaciously pursue his goal.

The Militia Stands Firm

It was clearly the Militia who presented the most difficult problem and a conference was called at the War Office to treat with the representatives of this stubborn and parochial force.[25] Major-General Mackinnon arranged the conference with fourteen Militia Colonels, headed by the Duke of Bedford and Lord Raglan. Lord Roberts, Lord Methuen, and General Mackinnon, as well as Generals Stopford, Haig and Colonel Ellison, represented the War Office, and the dependable Esher consented to chair the meeting.[26]

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[23]Gordon, p. 89.

[24]Sixsmith, p. 2.

[25]Dunlop, pp. 269-270.

[26]Ibid.

The War Office made the following proposals:

> The Militia should not form part of the Territorial Army; that the Militia should be drawn closer to the Regular Troops; that it should be made liable to service abroad in case of emergency; and that in the event of its being sent abroad, it was desirable that it should go out, as far as possible, in complete battalions or companies under their own officers, but that this should not preclude its being utilized to furnish drafts to the Regular Army in the field when necessary.[27]

The War Office proposal was rejected by the Militia Colonels who countered with a proposal of their own. The Militia stipulated that its officers should rank equal with officers of the line battalions; that they should be granted an exemption from civil obligation; money for uniforms should be given the Militia; bounty payments should be modified; and no one who had previously served two terms in the Militia should be allowed to compete for a Commission in the Regular Army. The Militia further demanded that it should be accorded all honors of the line battalions to which they were attached. These demands were unacceptable to the War Office representatives.[28]

The War Minister made one more attempt to reach an agreement with the Militia. He met informally with Lord Derby and offered a final choice. The Militia could either take a leading place in the Territorial Army or ally themselves more closely with the Regular Forces. The Militia

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[27] Ibid., p. 270. cf. Sixsmith, p. 6.

[28] Dunlop, p. 270; Sixsmith, p. 6; Teagarden, pp. 154-155, citing Command Paper 3513, p. 3.

chose to do neither, and their fate was sealed.[29]

On the other hand, the Volunteer officers did not relish turning over their commands to county associations and many of them looked upon their units with great proprietary interest. It was Haldane's viewpoint that the Volunteers would make a much more efficient addition to the Territorial Force if the commanding officers were not plagued with financial responsibilities which had been their lot.[30] Viscount Esher strongly supported the War Minister in a letter to the King's secretary. He wrote, "I agree with every word you say about the Volunteers. They are a gigantic fraud. . . . I am strongly in favour of Haldane's 'County Associations' scheme. . . ."[31]

It was now October and the pressure of influential Volunteer officers caused Haldane to waver on his commitment to county associations. A staunch supporter of the county association idea, Lord Esher prodded the War Minister,

> You have got to choose between a certain amount of opposition in the H/ouse/ of C/ommons/ and a loss of personal prestige in the Country. To my mind the position is not doubtful. You can, with your large majority, risk the former. You cannot risk the latter.[32]

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[29] Dunlop, p. 272.

[30] Teagarden, p. 157, citing Ellison, Lancashire Lad, XVII (February 1936), p. 9.

[31] Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 185.

[32] Ibid., p. 195.

The decision made, Haldane enlisted the aid of an old friend, John Kemp, and some of his old "devils" at Lincoln's Inn in drawing up the preliminary Territorial Force bill[33] and then asked Frederick Liddell to couch the bill in the proper Parliamentary format.[34]

The opposition was by no means cowed. The controversial General Wilson, who believed in armies of large Continental formations, belittled the Territorial Force. Lord Roberts added his doubts and Arnold-Forster was free with his vitriolic comments.[35] Major General Haig rode to the support of the embattled War Minister and firmly defended the Territorial plan. "I deprecate any change in the policy of creating a second line Army, complete in all arms and service."[36]

Committed to legislation, the War Minister, like a careful artisan, began to lay his plan for Parliamentary victory. Through Esher he enlisted the support of the King. Esher observed to the King,

> There is no doubt that very serious troubles lie in the immediate future for Mr. Haldane, owing to the opposition which his scheme will rouse in the Volunteers, and great strength of character will be required to push the scheme through the House of Commons where the Volunteers command large interest.[37]

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[33]Haldane, An Autobiography, p. 206. "Devils" here refers to some of Haldane's former lawyer assistants.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Dunlop, p. 275; Terraine, p. 42.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 205.

On 20 December, Haldane presented his plan to the cabinet and received their support. Esher records, the Prime Minister". . . told Haldane that he might count on his thorough support. The fact is that none of the cabinet understand, or ever will understand, the question."[38]

Realizing the importance of keeping the monarch informed, on 12 January 1907, the War Minister sent the King a draft of his bill. The King pledged his full support.[39] Leaving little to chance, Haldane arranged to meet with Balfour, the Opposition leader, on a weekend at Windsor Castle and requested his support. Balfour agreed to give Haldane his chance.[40] The problem now remained to squeeze the bill into the busy legislative calendar. One of the Liberal social reform bills had run into difficulties and Haldane explained, "I had a little Bill which would just fill the time."[41] Preparations made, the wiley War Minister was now ready to guide his bill through Parliament.

The Territorial and Reserve Forces Act

The Secretary of State for War chose his second estimate speech which he delivered on 25 February 1907, as a

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[38] Ibid., p. 209. Viscount Esher, as well as Haldane, was surprised by Campbell-Bannerman's support which may account for Esher's facetious comment.

[39] Lee, Vol. II, p. 500. King Edward was vitally interested in the passage of the Territorial Bill and gave the matter his personal attention.

[40] Haldane, An Autobiography, p. 207.

[41] Ibid.

handy vehicle to outline his plan for the Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill.[42] Haldane realized that he would need the full support of the Liberal benches for his Army Bill. He began his speech by unveiling a budget reduction of £2,036,000, an accomplishment for which he gave full credit to the Army.[43] He then fired his opening volley at the Militia. He pointed out:

> We get 12,000 recruits a year for the infantry of the Line from the Militia at present, and without the Militia we could not get them. . . . The result is that under the existing system the War Office must control the Militia. . . . and if the Militia protests against it, . . . the Militia must go under.[44]

The Yeomanry did not present major problems and only a minor effort would be required to establish them as the cavalry of the Territorial Army.[45]

The third element of the Territorial Army would be fashioned from the Volunteers. Haldane portrayed the sadly lacking financial structure of this force, "If they /the Volunteers/ were at war, the Colonel, whose business it is to provide socks, clothes, ammunition, and everything else, would have to carry these things with him in his saddle-bags."[46] Haldane proposed a standard financial arrangement for the Territorial Army which would allow the Volunteer commanders to spend their

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[42] Dunlop, p. 277; Maurice, Vol. I, p. 209.

[43] Sommer, p. 191. Haldane, Army Reform, pp. 94-99. This speech may also be found in Parl. Debs., 4, CLXIX (1907), pp. 1290-1326.

[44] Haldane, Army Reform, p. 108.

[45] Ibid., p. 110.

[46] Ibid., p. 111.

time training their units instead of worrying about financing them.[47]

The Territorial Army was to be organized in fourteen divisions supported by fourteen mounted brigades, complete with their own supply and support organizations, as well as artillery and engineers. The force would be organized on a county basis and the administration would be vested in the Lord Lieutenants of the county.[48] The primary purpose of the Territorial Army would be home service and the men would undergo an intensive six month training course. There was, however, no restriction on Territorial Force service abroad.[49]

Haldane concluded his address by detailing the advantage of the Territorial Force. Primarily the British nation would now have both a first and second line available for mobilization. The second line would be expandable in the event of war. In this manner, an efficient force would be provided at home to protect the country from the danger of invasion or raids.[50]

The War Minister then informed the members of the House that a copy of his bill would be available on the following Monday and to provide sufficient time for study the bill would not be placed on the legislative calendar until

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Maurice, Vol. I, p. 209; Haldane, Army Reform, pp. 115-119.

[49] Dunlop, p. 278, Parl. Debs., 4, CLXIX (1907), pp. 1300-1306.

[50] Haldane, Army Reform, p. 150.

after Easter.[51]

The same day Mr. Haldane issued his Memorandum upon the Military Forces in the United Kingdom.[52] In this document Haldane explained his plan in detail and enumerated the weaknesses of the Auxiliary Forces as they presently existed. Debate continued in the House of Commons for three days. The powers, duties and tasks of the county associations were fully discussed as were the roles of the Territorial Force and the special reserve.[53]

The bill was introduced on 4 March 1907, and the second reading was taken on April 9, 10, and 23.[54] Throughout the fight, Haldane's optimism never faltered, even though there were others who thought that the opposition of the Yeomanry and Volunteers would threaten the bill's passage.[55] The debate continued and the speakers rambled on. The opposition was not able to mount a concerted attack; they were satisfied with attacking first one point and then another. The influence of Militia, Volunteers and Yeomanry, each battling for their own parochial interest, was soon dissipated.

The bill had its third reading on June 19. Arnold-Forster rose to attack the Territorial scheme. In his

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[51] Ibid., pp. 153-154.

[52] Dunlop, p. 279, citing Command Paper 3297 of 1907.

[53] Ibid., p. 280.

[54] Ibid., p. 281; Maurice, Vol. I, p. 211.

[55] Brett (ed.), Vol. II, pp. 227-228.

harangue he constantly referred back to his own dead plan for a short term Army. The War Minister quickly disposed of Arnold-Forster's pathetic arguments. He quipped, "I own that I was under the impression that I found a deceased baby, and I decently interred it."[56] The bill passed by a majority of 286 to 63.[57]

The Earl of Portsmouth, Under-Secretary of State for War, guided Haldane's bill on its journey through the House of Lords.[58] The question of the Militia was uppermost in the minds of the Lords. The Earl of Wemyss accurately summed up the problem, "Your Lordships are no doubt aware that . . . the Militia has been taken out of the Territorial Force, and is no longer grouped with the Volunteers and Yeomanry. . . . The Militia is now to be a reserve for the Army."[59]

In order to placate the opposition in the Lords, Haldane, with Esher's help, compromised on a few minor points of his plan and in the middle of July the bill was finally accepted.[60] The King's formal consent was received on 2 August.[61]

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[56]Dunlop, p. 283.

[57]Parl. Debs., 4, CLXXVI (1907), pp. 578-579.

[58]Maurice, Vol. I, p. 212.

[59]Dunlop, p. 284; Sommer, p. 194.

[60]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 239.

[61]Lee, Vol. II, p. 501; Dunlop, p. 285.

The bill was a concise document, divided into four parts. Part I dealt with the county associations, their powers and duties, financial arrangements and regulations. Part II delineated the rules and regulations which would govern the Territorial Force, and covered such items as recruitment, discipline, pay, enlistment terms, training, civil rights, and terms of service. Part III concerned the Reserve Force, liabilities of service, enlistment and also dealt with transfer of Militia battalions to reserve units. Part IV constituted a short miscellaneous section.[62]

The passage of the Territorial Army bill caused considerable stir since its provisions affected not only members of the military establishment, but reached out to every corner of civilian enterprise where officers of the Auxiliary elements were engaged.

H.O. Arnold-Forster continued to indiscriminately attack every part of the bill.[63] Spenser Wilkinson deprecated the War Minister's accomplishments and wrote that all Haldane ". . . had done was to rechristen the Volunteers."[64] In an article published by the Contemporary Review, F.N. Maude

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[62]Great Britain, Statutes at Large, 7 Edw. VII, Ch. 9 (1907), "Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, 1907," pp. 1-26.

[63]The Times (London), March 5, 1907. Mr. Arnold-Forster carried out his attack in a series of articles published in The Times on March 5, 8, 10 and 16.

[64]Wilkinson, Thirty-Five Years, p. 308.

criticized the financial arrangements of the new Territorial Army.[65] The Quarterly Review, on the other hand, felt that the training provisions were insufficient to fit the Territorial Army for service in the event of an emergency.[66] Other journals of the day decried the untimely demise of the proud Militia.

The Territorial Army also had an equal number of staunch supporters. The influential Colonel Repington was generous with his praise for the War Minister. "Mr. Haldane and his military advisors have done their duty by the country and have done it well, considering the notorious limitations which restrict their initiative."[67] Most surprising was the tribute of the Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman; he wrote to his War Minister, "It is a great triumph to have carried such a large body of opinion with you, and I hope you will have as much satisfaction when you proceed to carry out and superintend the details of your magnum opus."[68]

The Territorial Army Becomes a Reality

The task was, however, only half finished. It now

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[65]F.N. Maude, "The New Army Scheme," The Contemporary Review, XCI (January-June 1907), p. 519.

[66]"Mr. Haldane and The Army," Quarterly Review (January-April 1907), p. 473.

[67]Charles à Court Repington, The Foundations of Reform (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1908), p. 324.

[68]Haldane, An Autobiography, p. 195.

remained to man the Second Line by voluntary enlistment. Haldane traversed the country lecturing, explaining and cajoling in an effort to win the support of county authorities and Volunteer commanding officers. The King supported Haldane to the full extent of his royal power and did what no other man in England could have done for the Territorial Army. On 26 October he called a meeting of the Lord Lieutenants of England, Wales and Scotland and enjoined them to give their full support to the Territorial Army.[69]

> My Lords and Gentlemen, I have summoned you . . . to acquaint you with the new duties and responsibilities which will now devolve upon you. . . . Henceforth my Yeomanry and my Volunteers are to form the Territorial Army, over the destinies which you and your County Associations are to watch; so to you are now delegated the duties of raising, equipping and maintaining that portion of this force the Imperial Army of the Second Line which lies within the shores of this Kingdom. The command and training of this force will be entrusted to the Generals in the commands and to the generals and other officers serving them, so that the force may enjoy in the fullest degree, in common with the Regular Army, those advantages which accrue from being instructed in the highest and most developed school of military thought. . . . In the performance of this difficult task I have instructed the military authorities to render all the help that is in their power to give; but the ultimate success must depend upon the goodwill and public spirit of my loyal subjects, inspired and guided by you and your County Associations. . . . My Lords and Gentlemen, The important duties and responsibilities which were formerly yours, are being restored to you and when you return hence to undertake this great and honourable task, I look to you to foster and direct, by your precept and example, the spirit of patriotic and voluntary effort which has for so long distinguished my loyal subjects. . . . I have faith that the united efforts of my people will enable you to achieve success.[70]

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[69]Lee, Vol. II, p. 501.

[70]Maurice, Vol. I, pp. 213-214.

Thus spoke the King of England.

The Duke of Norfolk, on behalf of the Lord Lieutenants, assured his sovereign that they would perform their new duties.[71] Mr. Haldane was deeply grateful and expressed his profuse thanks to the King. In order to provide for a period of conversion, Haldane fixed the birth date of the Territorial Army as 1 April 1908.[72] The War Minister continued to work tirelessly to stimulate enlistments in the Territorial Army. He traveled to all corners of England and was never too busy to meet or visit with a new unit. Slowly the force grew.[73]

Lord Esher persuaded The Daily Mail (London) to conduct a recruiting campaign on behalf of "The Terriers." The newspaper proved to be an appreciated ally in its efforts to entice recruits for the Territorial Army.[74] By 1 June 1909, the Territorial Force numbered 9,313 officers and 259,463 men.[75] Recruiting efforts continued and by 1910 the Territorial Army was manned to 88.5 per cent of its authorized strength.[76]

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[71]Lee, Vol. II, p. 501.

[72]Ibid. Maurice, Vol. I, p. 214.

[73]Dunlop, p. 286.

[74]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, p. 369. "Terriers" was a popular nickname for the Territorial Army. Haldane paid special tribute to The Daily Mail for its aid in recruiting.

[75]Dunlop, p. 287.

[76]Ibid.

The King also used his great influence to increase enlistments. During the months of June and July 1909, the sovereign presented 130 battalions with their colors, and in June he reviewed 108 Territorial Regiments and presented colors to them at Windsor.[77]

Haldane's vision of a Volunteer Army, a Second Line, had become reality. The creation of this force which was designed to provide the backing for the Expeditionary Force stands as a monument and marked a major milestone of the Haldane reforms.

Referring to the Second Line, Mr. Repington wrote, ". . . The Minister deserves the gratitude of the country for the patience, assiduity, and foresight which he has displayed in promoting a national work."[78] The value of this great accomplishment can best be measured by the tributes which were paid the Territorial Army on the occasion of its twenty-first anniversary. Lord Ypres remarked, ". . . Without the assistance which the Territorials afforded . . . it would have been impossible to have held the lines in France and Belgium. . . ."[79] It was the King himself who added, "There was no theatre of war to which they did not penetrate: there was none in which they did not do credit to the British name."[80]

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[77]Lee, Vol. II, pp. 508-509.

[78]Repington, Foundations of Reform, p. 392.

[79]The Times (London), April 1, 1929. Lord Ypres formerly General Sir John French.

[80]Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

IN RETROSPECT

The "Warrior's"Lot

The energy of Richard Burdon Haldane was like a bubbling fountain. In the remarkably short period of two and a half years he completely revitalized and reorganized the British Army system. A trained Expeditionary Force was a reality, the British General Staff was a functioning organization and the Territorial Force was rapidly becoming an effective combat reserve organization. It was, however, not yet the "warrior's"lot to sheathe his sword for the task was not yet complete.

Lord Roberts and his National Service League believed that the British Army should be a large force built on the Continental model and advocated national conscription.[1] Lord Roberts also had the support of General Wilson, Commandant of the Staff College, who was primarily concerned about the lack of provision for expansion of the Army in war time.[2] General Kitchener also lent his name to the cause of the opposition. He was typical of a small group of generals

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[1]Maurice, Vol. I, p. 221.

[2]Callwell, Vol. I, p. 76.

who believed that politicians were, by nature, incapable of reforming the Army.[3]

On 12 March 1908, Roberts attacked Haldane's scheme in the House of Lords. His target was the addition of partially-trained artillery batteries to the Territorial Force. Artillery, Roberts contended, must be fully trained and the Territorial batteries would be useless even dangerous in their semi-trained state.[4]

At this point even the King temporarily wavered in his support of the War Minister and conveyed his doubts to Haldane through a letter from Sir Arthur Davison who wrote:

> The King gathered from the views of Lord Roberts and others that the training of the Territorial artillery was inadequate, and drew your attention to their argument that if these gunners were imperfectly trained their value disappeared.[5]

Haldane, however, was able to allay his sovereign's fears and the dependable Esher rallied to the War Minister's cause in a letter to the King on 8 April 1908, which closed with this ringing indorsement, ". . . Mr. Haldane has done more for the Regular Army than any minister since Cardwell, and that your Majesty will be unfortunate when he ceases to be your Majesty's Secretary of State."[6]

In June 1908, the army estimates encountered fierce

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[3]Philip Magnus, Kitchener: Portrait of an Imperialist. (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1959), p. 228.

[4]Lee, Vol. II, p. 503; Maurice, Vol I, pp. 221-222; Dunlop, p. 275.

[5]Lee, Vol. II, p. 505.

[6]Brett (ed.), Vol. II, pp. 302-303.

opposition in the Cabinet. Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Winston Churchill, President of the Board of Trade, supported by Fisher, The First Sea Lord, advocated drastic reductions in the army estimates. The pressure became so intense that Haldane considered resignation. However, Edward VII was so impressed with his War Minister's fight that he enjoined him to stand firm. Haldane won the battle of the estimates and fully regained the confidence of the King. Haldane also had the support of Asquith, the Prime Minister, and Grey.[7]

The fight against conscription and the National Service League occupied much of the War Minister's time during the years 1908 to 1910. The powerful advocates of conscription were firmly entrenched in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords. They were a "thorn in Haldane's side," particularly while he was battling the retrenchers over the 1908 estimates.[8]

The conscriptionists, meanwhile, moved to a literary battlefield. In 1909, Spenser Wilkinson wrote Britain at Bay which painted a dark future unless conscription became the "order of the day."[9] Arnold-Forster apparently could not resist the challenge to reply. In his book Military Needs and Military Policy he resurrected the short service army

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[7]Sommer, pp. 214-217, cf. Philip Magnus, King Edward the Seventh (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1964), pp. 386-387.

[8]Maurice, Vol. I., pp. 265-266.

[9]Spenser Wilkinson, Britain at Bay (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1910), Passim.

scheme he had advocated earlier.[10] Haldane entered the fray and asked his Adjutant-General, Sir Ian Hamilton, to present the arguments against conscription. Haldane personally contributed a forty-two page "Introduction" to Hamilton's book Compulsory Service: A Study of the Question in the Light of Experience.[11]

The National Service League refuted Hamilton's book with a pamphlet by its own champion, Lord Roberts, entitled Fallacies and Facts: An Answer to "Compulsory Service."[12] This book was the last of the "literary lances." There were several attempts to push a compulsory service bill through Parliament. In each case, however, the bill ran into strong opposition and was withdrawn.[13]

Haldane continued to build the Territorial Force and in 1908, accomplished yet another reform. He published the Army Order of 1 March 1908, which initiated an Officers' Training Corps. This program was designed to produce reserve

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[10]Arnold-Forster, Military Needs, passim.

[11]Ian Hamilton, Compulsory Service: A Study of the Question in the Light of Experience. (London: John Murray, 1911), pp. 1-42. Haldane's conduct here was questionable and he was criticized for involving an active duty officer in a political conflict.

[12]Earl Roberts, Fallacies and Facts, An answer to "Compulsory Service." (London: John Murray, 1911).

[13]Parl. Debs., 4, CLXXXXI (1908), p. 1486.

officers with minimum interference to their civil careers and formed officer training corps in conjunction with public school and the university.[14]

The medical corps was improved and a nursing service was added to the Territorial Force. Throughout the remaining years of his career as War Minister, Haldane continued to labor on behalf of the Royal Army.

The Later Years

He was raised to the peerage in 1911, and, in 1912, when Lord Loreburn resigned the Lord Chancellorship, Asquith offered the post to Haldane. Haldane thanked the Prime Minister in the following words, "More than six years ago you fought a hard fight for your old friend over this great office and now you have yourself bestowed it on him. My feeling I will not try to express. You know how deep it is."[15]

In the years that followed the ring of the German jackboot became louder and louder and the British nation girded for war. Old hatreds were revived and, as in time of war and national crisis, reason fled the minds of men and tempers flared. Haldane's enemies wasted little time in branding him a Germanophile. It was said that in earlier years Haldane had made statements that his spiritual home was

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[14]Dunlop, pp. 294-295.

[15]Sommer, p. 269. Haldane's term as Lord Chancellor is lucidly described in Haldane, An Autobiography, pp. 266-308.

in Germany. In truth, this alluded only to his love of philosophy and the roots of that discipline which are firmly anchored in Germany.[16] No man was a greater patriot and had more love of England than Haldane. Ironically, it was Lord Haldane who was summoned in the first days of the war to put into action the plan which he had so faithfully designed. Acting for the Prime Minister, Haldane returned to the War Office and on 3 August 1914 directed the immediate mobilization of the Expeditionary Force, the Territorial Force and other reserve elements.[17]

After the end of the war in 1918, peace and tranquility returned once again to England. Only then did Viscount Haldane begin to receive some of the credit that was his due. Yet, one cannot help but consider the humiliating lies and charges which had been heaped upon this man who had devoted all of his adult life to the law and the service of England.

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[16] Ibid., p. 302; Sommer, pp. 318-319.

[17] Haldane, An Autobiography, pp. 294-300. It should be clarified that Haldane was not at this time Secretary of State for War. He acted temporarily for Asquith, the Prime Minister, who had also assumed the War Minister's duties following Sir John Seely's involvement in the "Curragh Mutiny."

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The Spirit of Haldane

The accomplishments of Viscount Haldane met the tests of time and war. The Expeditionary Force which was on British soil in a matter of days after war was declared fought with glory at Mons and Ypres. The official British historian lauded the "Old Contemptibles" as "The line that stood between the British Empire and ruin."[18] The Imperial General Staff has lead the British armed forces with honor and efficiency through two world wars and has only recently reverted to become once again the British General Staff. The Territorials, which in two wars were the nucleus around which a great citizen army was formed, have lived until the present day and only now are undergoing a complete revision to mold them to modern British defense requirements.[19]

General Douglas Haig, when he returned from the shores of France at the end of World War I, visited Haldane and presented him with a copy of his war dispatches inscribed, "To Viscount Haldane of Cloan -- the greatest Secretary for

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[18]Terraine, p. 112.

[19]Letter from General Sir James Cassels, Chief of Defence Staff to the author, February 25, 1966.

War England has ever had."[20] Haldane was no wild-eyed reformer, no expert on armies nor did he enter office with ready-made plans and pre-packaged reforms. Had Haldane attempted to build a large Continental Army, it is likely that he too would have failed. Yet, Haldane was a scholar, an astute politician, who shrewdly measured the temper of the times and realized that the tax-burdened public and his own economy-minded party would not support a scheme for a gigantic army. He therefore wisely mated efficiency and economy and placed into the hands of Britain an army which was an effective instrument of war.

There were many who labored with Haldane to bring about these great changes in the British Army. The influential Lord Esher, Generals Haig, Nicholson, Ewart, Grierson, the redoubtable Colonel Ellison, the list is a long one. Yet ultimately, the responsibility, the success and the failures must rest on Haldane's shoulders alone. Sixty years have passed, yet the foundation remains. General Cassells, the present Chief of the General Staff, states,

> Despite the fact that we have now felt it necessary to discard the framework for the Reserves which he /Haldane/ established, and which served the British Nation so well in two World Wars, it is remarkable tribute to his foresight and clear thinking that few really significant changes to this Reserve framework have been found necessary until now.[21]

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[20]Haldane, An Autobiography, pp. 307-308; Charteris, p. 37.

[21]Letter, Cassells to the author, February 25, 1966.

Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck credits Haldane with creating ". . . An army fit to fight in the great war of 1914-1918."[22] Field Marshal Alexander refers to the Haldane reforms as "the basis of our armed forces."[23]

The British Army has changed with the needs of the times, yet even now after sixty years have passed, "The Spirit of Haldane Lives."[24] But the greatest tribute of all is the accolade bestowed by the man in the street who even now, more than half a century later, when he wishes to pay a compliment to a present Minister of War calls him, "The best since Haldane."[25]

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[22]Letter from Field-Marshal, Sir Claude Auchinleck to the author, March 12, 1966.

[23]Letter from Field-Marshal, the Right Honorable Earl (Harold G.) Alexander to the author, February 23, 1966.

[24]Letter from Brigadier, Sir John K. Dunlop, Military Author and historian to the author, May 31, 1966.

[25]Letter from Major General, E.K.G. Sixsmith, Military Author to the author, March 29, 1966.

APPENDIX A

THE REORGANIZATION OF THE REGULAR ARMY WHICH ESTABLISHED THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE*

ALDERSHOT COMMAND

1st Cavalry Brigade

1st Division

1st Brigade - Aldershot
2nd Brigade - Blackdown
3rd Brigade - Bordon
Three Field Artillery Brigades of three batteries each
One Field Artillery (Howitzer) Brigade
Two Royal Engineer Field Companies
Two Royal Engineer Divisional Telegraph Companies

2nd Division

4th (Guards) Brigade - London
5th Brigade - Aldershot
6th Brigade - Aldershot
Three Field Artillery Brigades
Two Royal Engineers Field Companies

Army Troops

1st and 2nd Royal Engineer Air Line Companies
1st and 2nd Royal Engineer Cable Telegraph Companies
1st and 2nd Wireless Telegraphy Companies
1st and 2nd Royal Engineer Balloon Companies
1st and 3rd Bridging Train

EASTERN COMMAND

2nd Cavalry Brigade - Canterbury
4th Cavalry Brigade - Colchester

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*John K. Dunlop, The Development of the British Army, 1899-1914 (London: Methuen, 1938), pp. 262-264.

4th Division

10th Brigade - Shorncliffe
11th Brigade - Colchester
12th Brigade - Chatham
Three Field Artillery Brigades
One Field Artillery (Howitzer) Brigade
Two Royal Engineer Field Companies

IRISH COMMAND

3rd Cavalry Brigade - Curragh

5th Division

13th Brigade - Dublin
14th Brigade - Curragh
15th Brigade - Belfast
Three Field Artillery Brigades
One Field Artillery (Howitzer) Brigade
Two Royal Engineer Field Companies

6th Division

16th Brigade - Fermoy
17th Brigade - Tipperary
18th Brigade (In Northern Command with Battalion at York, Lichfield (two) and Sheffield)
Three Field Artillery Brigades
One Royal Engineer Field Company

SOUTHERN COMMAND

1st Royal Garrison Artillery Heavy Brigade
2nd Royal Garrison Artillery Heavy Brigade

3rd Division

7th Brigade - Tidworth
8th Brigade - Devonport
9th Brigade - Portsmouth
Three Field Artillery Brigades
One Field Artillery (Howitzer) Brigade
Two Royal Engineer Field Companies

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